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The Washington Monthly

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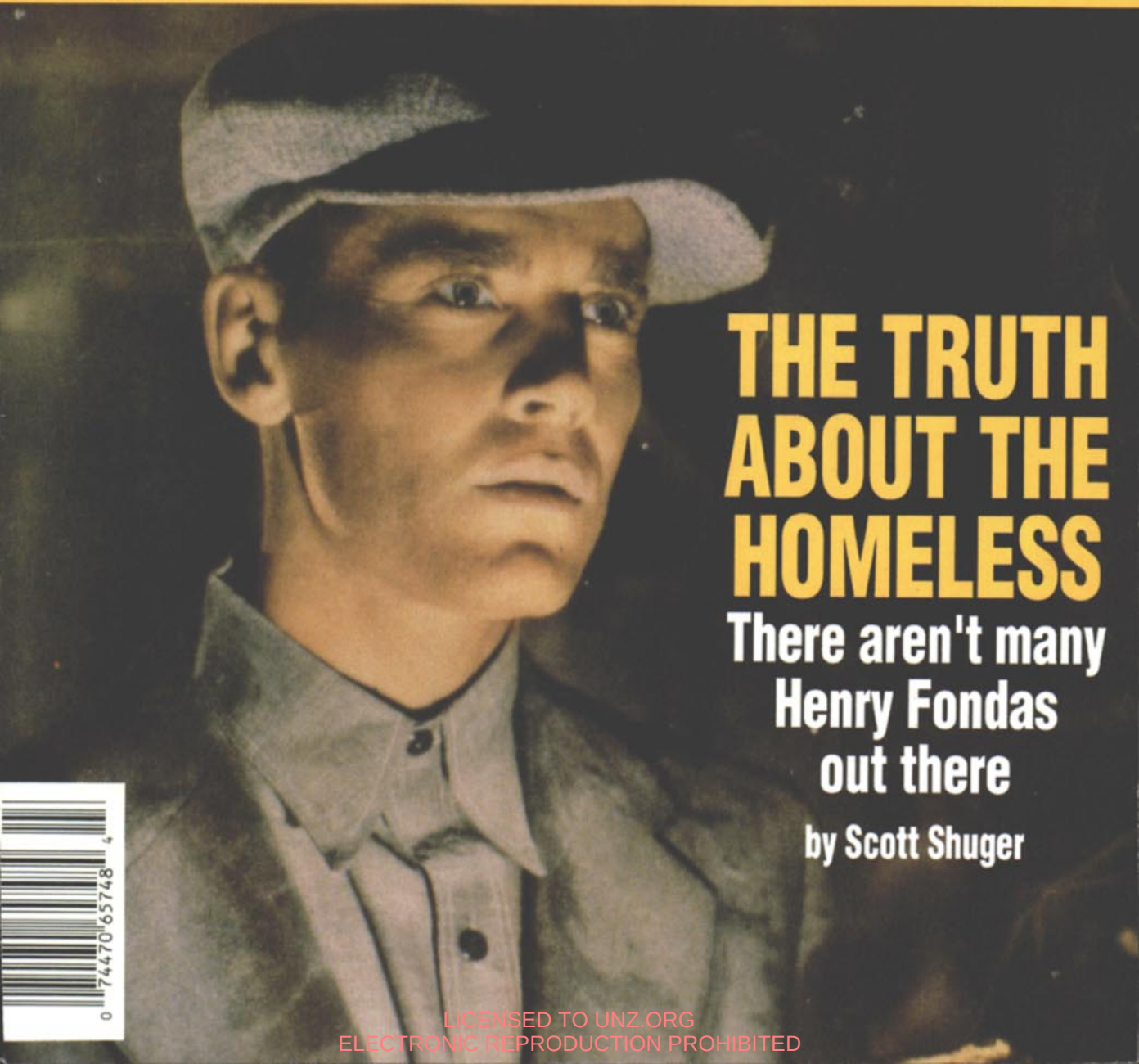
- Renting the Fourth Estate: What's wrong with journalists' honoraria
- Also, Dan Quayle as Prince Hal, and Sandra McElwaine on Barbara Walters



THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOMELESS

There aren't many Henry Fondas out there

by Scott Shuger

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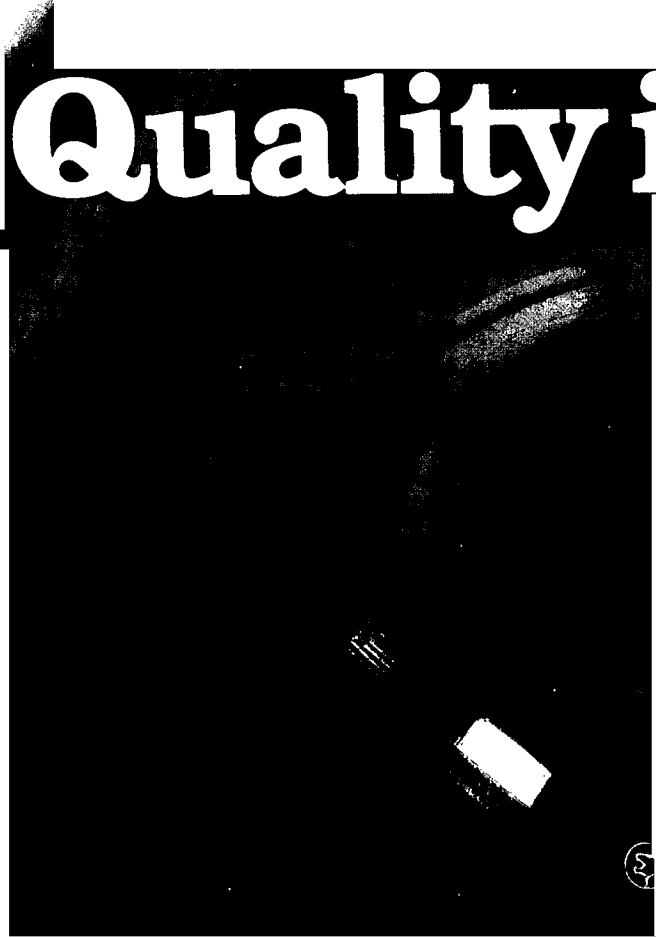

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The Washington Monthly
Volume Twenty-Two, Number Two March 1990

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LETTERS

Go figure

I was more than a little put off by your disparagement of the news reporters who used a figure of more than 200 fatalities in reporting the October 17 earthquake ["Tilting at Windmills," December]. Being a frequent user of the Cypress Freeway that collapsed, I know that normally at that time of day there would be some 300 vehicles on the mile-long section of the lower deck which was crushed by the upper deck. If traffic had been heavy stop-and-go, as it frequently is, there could easily have been over 500 cars and buses smashed and burned.

Speculation by the traffic reporters flying over the scene initially placed the figure much higher than 200 for that site alone. It was obvious that of those trapped in their cars between the pancaked tons of concrete slabs, very few would survive. Fortunately, for whatever reasons, traffic was unusually light when the earthquake struck, but this was not ascertainable until many days had passed.

It's amazing how you and Eleanor Randolph of *The Washington Post* were able to determine from the east coast that newsmen on the scene were "hyping" the story.

JOSEPH R. MARKS
Foster City, California

I was pleased to see your discussion of the media's exaggeration of the recent California earthquake. I was even more pleased to find out that there was at least one article written about it—I hadn't seen any, and I was bristling about it for weeks. I hope that Ms. Randolph's article in the *Post* noted that because the original estimate of the death toll was incorrect, the frequently heard claim that the quake was the second worst in American history is also questionable. "Second worst" was originally "second deadliest" until newscasters started to get sloppy in repeating one another's stories. The quake could still be called second worst in terms of economic damage, but the high cost of this quake is more a measure of San Francisco's affluence than of the severity of the quake. In other parts of the country there are entire towns with a total property value lower than that of a few blocks in downtown San Francisco.

MARK D. LEW
Oakland, California

Frying Nunn

I would like to take a moment to correct a few inaccuracies contained in the Tim Noah profile of me which recently appeared in your magazine ["Born to Be Mild," December].

First, I have not supported a constitutional amendment to ban abortion. I have always said that I would oppose a Human Life Amendment which states that life begins at the moment of conception. In addition, I have always believed that abortions should be allowed in the case of rape, incest, and to protect the life of the mother.

Second, it was news to me that I oppose the Equal Rights Amendment, since there has never been a vote on the amendment while I've been in Congress. In fact, I have consistently said I would support the Equal Rights Amendment. I have always reserved—and you may view this position as being "too technical"—my right to support amendments which would clarify the meaning of the Amendment in certain instances.

Third, while the article concluded that I don't have any firm views about the ABM treaty, such an assessment will cause any reader familiar with my record, and with defense issues in general, to seriously question the credibility of your article. Without falling into the dry, cold clutches of "fine print" by arguing the prerogative of the Senate with respect to treaties, I certainly did not think that my effort on behalf of the ABM treaty—including three speeches on the floor of the Senate and a very public disagreement with the Reagan administration—was undertaken without conviction.

Finally, the article left the impression that I did not have a position with respect to the B-2. I have been a strong supporter of the B-2 for some time and have stated this position in numerous interviews and in press conferences. I plead guilty to the charge of wanting to "dot every *i* and cross every *t* of quantifiable fact" before we spend billions of taxpayer dollars on the B-2. I believe it is important that we make sure its stealth technology works and that the plane can fly.

SAM NUNN
Washington, D.C.

The author replies:

I never questioned Senator Nunn's commitment to the constitutional issues at stake in the ABM debate. Obviously he is passionate about them. What I wrote was that Nunn lacks firm views about the ABM treaty itself. When I asked Nunn point-blank whether he believes the treaty ought to be adhered to, he did not say "yes." He said, "I think it should be until we have a viable reason to depart from it." One reason to depart from it might be the implementation of the Accidental Launch Protection Systems (ALPS), an antimissile defense plan that Nunn himself proposed in 1988. I asked Nunn whether ALPS would require a revision of the ABM treaty, as many have claimed. Nunn answered that he thought it could be made to comply with the treaty, but if it could not, "we should seek an amendment. I'm not saying that the ABM treaty should never be changed. I'm just saying if we change it, it

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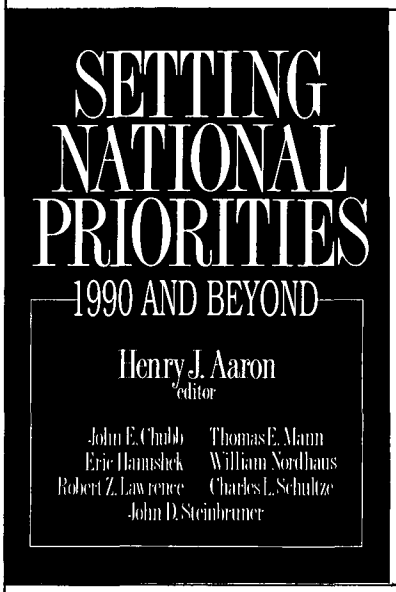

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ought to be done either by amendment or, if we terminate it, it ought to be done under the terms of the treaty." I read this as a less than wholehearted endorsement of the ABM treaty.

Nunn does indeed support the B-2 "Stealth" bomber, but he does not go out of his way to say so, and when he does say so, he quickly changes the subject to America's need for some kind of penetrating bomber. There's a reason for this: Test results for the B-2 bomber have been uninspiring. Last summer a reporter asked Nunn whether Stealth itself is "really good technology." Nunn answered, "Well, let's put it this way: If that plane doesn't fly, the debate is over. It is far too expensive to be a Stealth taxi." Nunn was—and is—hedging his bets on Stealth.

On the Equal Rights Amendment, Nunn has supported amendments that put up various roadblocks to extending the ratification deadline. For example, in 1978 Nunn supported an amendment to require that Congress extend ERA by a two-thirds vote rather than a simple majority. (The amendment failed.) Women's groups did not consider those who supported such amendments to be "supporters" of ERA, but I may have overstated the case when I wrote that Nunn "opposed" ERA.

Finally, on abortion, Nunn voted for a 1983 constitutional amendment sponsored by Senator Orrin Hatch that would have allowed (but not required) Congress and the states to outlaw or restrict abortions. The amendment was defeated. Obviously its intent was to make abortion illegal, but my shorthand description of it as an amendment "to ban abortion" was too sweeping. I apologize for the error.

Wronged rights

I do not agree with Paul Savoy ["When Criminal Rights Go Wrong," December] that his contention that our criminal justice system must adopt the double standard of distinguishing those who cannot prove their innocence *after* having their constitutional rights violated from others, represents "common sense." Admittedly, as a former prosecutor and law professor, Mr. Savoy has not labored in legal professions known for their common sense and unbiased approach to such questions. But isn't it remarkable that whenever the reactionary right launches a pet campaign, whether to advocate racial superiority, realpolitik, armed intervention, or a phony "war against drugs," it can always rely on pseudo-intellectual support from someone in academia who will claim to possess "common sense?"

LOUIS MARINUS WIJSEN
San Francisco, California

Having read Paul Savoy's treatise supporting the notion that only the innocent have rights, I look forward to the sequel: only the guilty are ever accused. For examples of what happens when the accused has no rights I refer you to Germany of the 1930s, or closer to home, our own beloved South of that period.

THOMAS L. SLOAN
Fort Washington, Maryland

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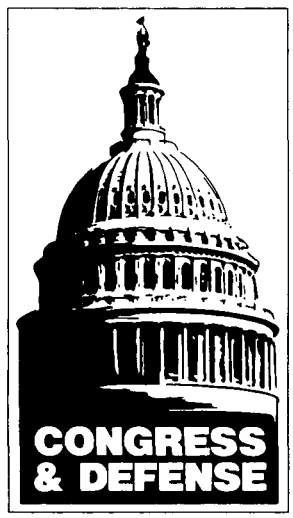

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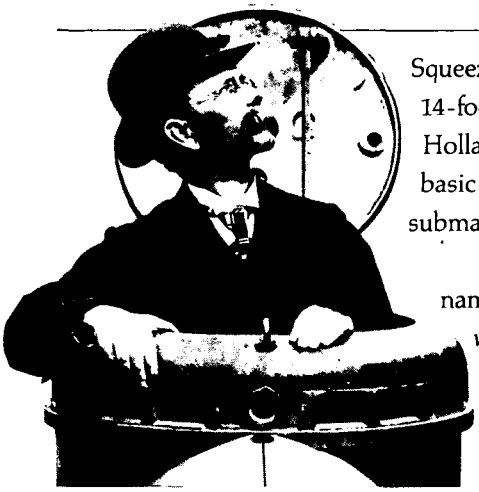
OUR FIRST SUBMARINE DID ONLY ONE REMARKABLE THING. IT CAME BACK UP.



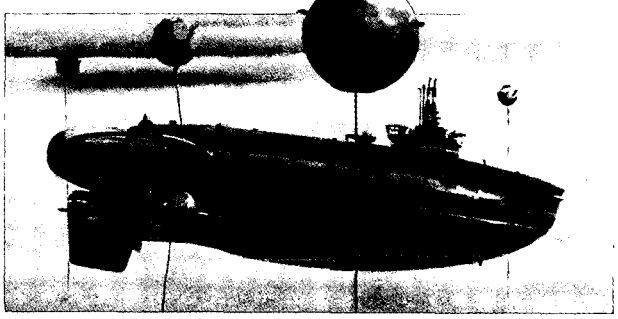
John Holland invented the first submarine accepted by the U.S. Navy. Amazed reports said, "She goes like a fish and dives better than one."

Squeezed into a crude, 14-foot craft, John P. Holland proved the basic principles of submarines in 1878. His poetically named "Boat No. 1" was hauled to the Passaic River by 16 stallions for testing. It stuck in the mud, it leaked, but it came back up.

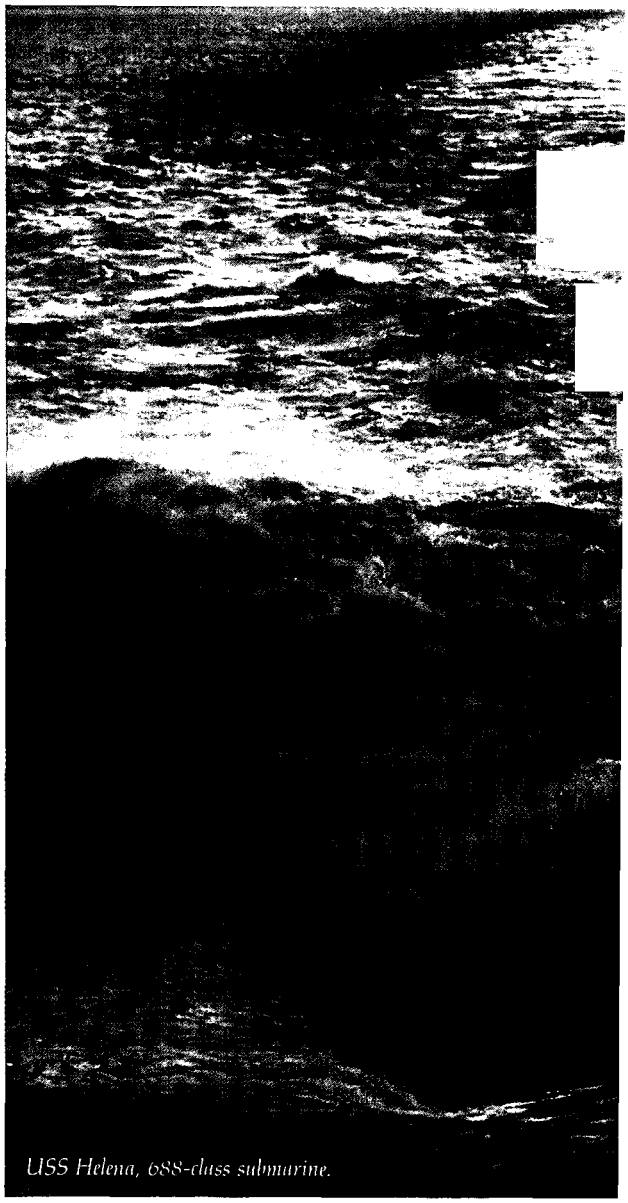
To us, the only thing more remarkable than the submarine itself was the courage of the submariner. Something that's still true today.

Holland got his Electric Boat Company, our earliest ancestor, off to a strong start in 1900, when the 74-ton submersible Holland became the U.S. Navy's first submarine. Showing his confidence in this new type vessel, President Theodore Roosevelt alarmed Secret Service bodyguards by taking an unscheduled dive aboard an A-class Plunger, August 26, 1905.

Running silent as well as deep became possible in 1933, when Electric Boat launched Cuttlefish, the first double-hulled, welded, air-conditioned submarine. She was the prototype for all World War II Navy fleet submarines.



All WWII fleet submarines were based on Cuttlefish, the first submarine to be welded, rather than riveted, and a technical milestone.



USS Helena, 688-class submarine.

But it was on January 17, 1955, that we introduced the most dramatic improvement in submarines since John Holland and Boat No. 1. It was Nautilus, the world's first atom-powered vessel. And in an astonishing adventure, she became the first submarine to sail under the North Pole.

Today, our Tridents, the world's most advanced submarines, routinely patrol for 70 days without surfacing. Longer than the Washington Monument is tall, they are so carefully made that they cruise in virtual silence.

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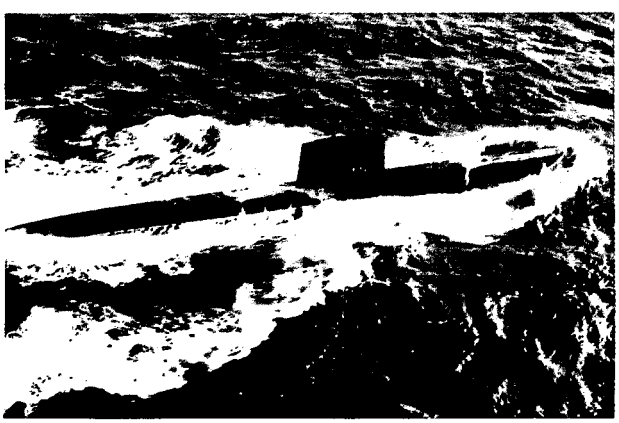

USS Nautilus was the first vessel to radio, "Underway on nuclear power." She then became the first to sail under the North Pole.

Yet innovations continue. Seawolf, a new class of submarine now under construction in our yards, will advance submarine science into the next century.

Seawolf re-proves two principles first proved by John Holland and Boat No. 1. That under deep water is found man's highest technology. And his highest courage.

Dedication to both has kept us improving American submarines for 90 years.

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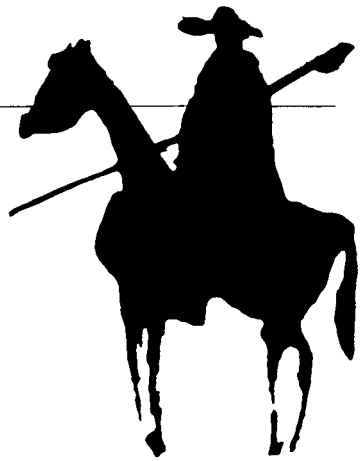

Democrats who despair of finding a candidate who can match George Bush's eloquence should take heart. Geraldine Ferraro has told an interviewer:

"I would love to be back in Washington. I would love to be part of the decision-making process with reference to what's going on in this country." . . .

Buried in all the heartening stories about the explosion of freedom behind the Iron Curtain were two sentences from an East Berliner that I found chilling:

"People don't care about all the new [political] parties. They just want to buy things."

What worries me is that too little of the world upheaval may be anchored in real democratic commitment and too much of it driven by a yearning for freedom to consume. The world is becoming so much the same that, instead of getting the Thomas Jefferson of Bulgaria, we may be left with half-priced Gorbachev Birthday Sales and Midnight Madness at the Minsk Mall . . . .

And, since I'm in a wet blanket mood, I might as well give you this cheery news about the "reform" regime we have installed in Panama. The new attorney general, Rogello Cruz, has been a director of a bank owned by one of the bosses of the Cali drug gang in Colombia. Guillermo Ford, the second vice president, is part owner of the Dadeland Bank of Florida, which, according to *The New York Times*, "was named in a court case two years ago as a central financial institution for one of the biggest Medellin launderers." Guillermo Endara, the new president, has for years been a director of a Panamanian bank frequently used by the Medellin gang. . . .

If you doubt my contention that the American legal system's principal beneficiaries are American lawyers, consider the recent suit by CBS shareholders against CBS alleging that the company was mismanaged from 1983 to 1986. The suit resulted in a judgment of $6 million against CBS. What exactly did that mean? $4.5 million was transferred from CBS's insurance company to the CBS treasury, $1.5 million went to the shareholders' attorney. . . .

You can imagine how pleased I was, after spending 21 years trying to persuade the press to cover bureaucracy, to see two stories about it recently made the front page of *The New York Times*. In "Welcome to New York City, Chancellor (but Please Hold)," Felicia R. Lee tells of the first days on the job of the new Schools Chancellor, Joseph A. Fernandez. Noticing that his office windows were dirty, Fernandez asked that they be cleaned. He was told that union contracts specify window cleaning once a year. Next, when he complained that his floor was dirty, he was told that vacuuming was done every other day. Then when he asked for some yellow highlighter pens, he was told that they would take four weeks to order.

Then came Joseph Berger, "In School Bureaucracy, Despair at the System," in which one interviewee tells of "redundancies" that have been allowed to collect over the years:

"There are lawyers and budget officers and building specialists in separate bureaus, like the High School Division, when the board already has its own offices of legal services and budget operations, and a division of school buildings."

Another source told Berger the bureaucracy "could be cut down dramatically."

I congratulate the *Times* for having gotten this far. The next step is to do the reporting that will go behind the quotes to determine whether they are true or not. My guess is that they are, but why leave the reader in doubt? . . .

I also want to congratulate the *Times* on another story that the editor had the courage to run on

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the front page because it was important, even though it wasn't pegged to the day's news. This one was headlined "A Corporate Lag in Research Funds is Causing Worry—High-Tech Edge at Stake—Economists Say New Pattern Cuts Chances for U.S. to Make Breakthroughs." Among the unfortunate developments described by the story was the tendency of corporate raiders to cut research budgets first as they seek the cash flow to pay the debt incurred by their buyout. . . .

The FAA keeps telling us that the Avianca crew didn't declare a fuel "emergency." Here's the conversation between a crew member and a New York controller *40 minutes* before the plane crashed:

Avianca: "I think we need priority."

Controller: "How long can you hold and what's your alternate?"

Avianca: "Yes, sir, well, we'll be able to hold about five minutes. That's all we can do."

Controller: "Roger. What is your alternate?"

Avianca: "Uh, it's Boston, but its uh, uh, full of traffic."

Controller: "Say again your alternate airport?"

Avianca: "It was Boston, but we can't do it now. We would run out of fuel now." . . .

When your television set gets hooked up to a cable, you find yourself watching more movies than you have in years. If that's not true of everyone, it certainly is of me. Since I usually belong among those who believe older is better in music, art, and architecture, I have been surprised to find that at least in some ways I like the new films better than the old. Certainly settings are much more authentic than they were when practically everything was filmed on the back lots of Hollywood.

And casting is much better today. In the old days, each studio had a stock company of character actors—e.g., Frank McHugh and Alan Hale at Warner Bros., Lewis Stone and Keenan Wynn at MGM—who were just as regularly cast in supporting roles as the studios' stars were in the leading parts. The result was, just as with the stars, the personalities of the character actors dominated each of their roles so that when you went to the movies you had the feeling that you were encountering the same people over and over again.

Now, casting is a recognized art—"Casting by" is prominent among the list of credits at the beginning of almost every new film—and the result is a vastly more varied and truer and realer supporting cast. Among the many recent triumphs of the art, one that struck me as especially brilliant was the deputy sheriff's wife in *Mississippi Burning*. . . .

In the speech Marion Barry made at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Washington before he left for treatment, he said a few words I couldn't believe he would get away with:

"I've had to look my human weaknesses straight in the eye, had to realize that I spent so much time caring about and worrying about and doing for others, I've not worried enough or cared enough for myself."

But I was wrong. He did get away with it. No one pointed out that he cared so much about the people of Washington that he gave them a government riddled with

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incompetence and corruption, presided over by a mayor whose only major concern other than personal pleasure was reelection. . . .

Speaking of corruption, the coming trial of two Barry associates, David E. Rivers, a city official, and John Clyburn, a local contractor, should provide a good window into how the kickback racket has worked in the District of Columbia during the past 12 years. . . .

If you need a window into the mentality of the officials who preside over the official theft from the poor that is carried out by state lotteries, consider this statement by Joseph B. Jason of the Maryland lottery agency:

"They know from day one the only way out of the ghetto is to win the numbers game." . . .

I was delighted to see an op-ed article in *The New York Times* called "Next, the 'Flee Decade,' " predicting that the thirtysomethings will abandon their single-minded focus on money-making and seek a better way.

I've got some suggestions for them:

First—start your own business, the primary purpose being not to make money but to create jobs and deliver a high quality product or service without harming the environment or endangering worker health or safety.

Second—teaching. Every one of us who has ever had a really good teacher knows what an exciting and rewarding (in every sense but financial) career teaching can be.

Public service. There are too many inferior or marginal talents in government. We need some of those hotshots who have been wasting their lives on Wall Street and in big-time law. It may be that it's too late to morally reprogram most of them, but a substantial minority must have enough basic decency to be horrified by the lives they've been leading.

To get these people into teaching and public service fast we've got to blast out the various guild rules designed to protect inferior incumbents. We've got to make it a lot easier to fire bad teachers and bored civil servants and to quickly hire—as with alternative certification—the able, regardless of their formal credentials.

Out there somewhere there must be at least one foundation head bright enough to fund a major effort to help these talents get into work that counts . . . .

If you need to understand why some civil servants need to be replaced, consider the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission employee involved in this story:

When the FERC solicited bids recently for transcribing its hearings, three companies offered to do the job for free. The reason was that because so many rich oil and gas companies want copies, the transcriber has been able to make money just by selling copies of the transcripts. One company, however, went even further, offering to *pay* the FERC $1.25 million for the privilege of transcribing the hearings.

So the FERC leapt in the air with delight and accepted the offer? No. James E. Thompson, the FERC's procurement director, said the money wouldn't do the FERC any good. By law, he explained to *The Washington Post*'s Dale Russakoff, the money would have to go into the U.S. Treasury. There it might not help the FERC but would help all American citizens. But the Thompsons of the civil service never stop to think of things like that . . . .

Like practically everyone other than the neo-Nazis, I was delighted by the South African government's recognition of the African National Congress and by the release of Nelson Mandela. I was, however, depressed by the recent publication of a statement Mandela made about the ANC in an interview last year:

"We all accept the need for some form of socialism to enable our people to catch up with the advanced countries of the world and to overcome their legacy of poverty. . . ."

The sad fact is that the rest of Africa is littered with wreckage of economies destroyed by socialism. Even brilliant men of good will, such as Tanzania's Julius Nyere, saw their dreams thwarted by an economic doctrine that simply does not work. . . .

If ever there was an example of the folly of incrementalism, next year's IRS budget is it. This year the IRS will audit 97 of every 10,000 returns, the lowest figure in history. So what improvement will be made next year? 102 will be audited. IRS employees gave taxpayers erroneous replies to one question in three last year, but the budget for answering telephone tax questions will be increased from $317 million to only $330 million, or less than 5 percent. . . .

You of course know about Alan Greenspan's involvement with—and endorsement of—Lincoln Savings & Loan. Now comes the news that the co-architect of the interest-rate hedging techniques that helped wreck the recently seized Franklin Savings Association was Wayne Angell, who is also one of the

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Federal Reserve governors in Washington.

Franklin, located in the small town of Ottawa, Kansas, managed to grow into one of the largest savings and loans in the country by offering unusually high interest rates, which it attempted to finance through investment in high-risk mortgage futures, much as Lincoln had attempted to use dubious junk bonds to pay its interest. While deregulation, bad managers, and advisers like Greenspan and Angell must rank as the main culprits behind these scandals, the depositors themselves should not be free from blame. What made them think these firms had the magic ability to pay such unusually high rates? Wasn't there an investor greed factor in all this? And why should the taxpayer be stuck with paying off CDs at those unusual rates? Give the investor back his principal plus reasonable interest But let's stop rewarding his greed by paying off the interest that was unusual. . . .

Uncritical admirers of the Fifth Amendment may be interested to learn that white FBI agents in Chicago are taking the Fifth to avoid testifying in a suit alleging racial discrimination by the FBI against a black agent. If the white agents are innocent, why take the Fifth? If they are guilty, what public interest is served by allowing them to avoid testifying? . . .

Last month I complained about the FAA's rule that requires pilots to retire at 60 even if they are in excellent health. I've subsequently learned that the rule is based on a study of private, not commercial airline, pilots.

Of course the FAA does not apply the rule to private pilots, even though they may be flying business aircraft jammed with passengers. It also does not apply the rule to commuter pilots—and they fly passengers every day.

This is an excellent example of why people hate regulation. But the lesson to be learned is not that regulation itself is bad, but stupid regulation is bad.

If we do what the foes of regulation want us to do—let the market decide—we will let an unsafe airline fly until its record is so frightening that its passengers desert. The catch is that a lot of people will have died while "the market" is working. So the argument should not be between regulation and no regulation but between stupid regulation and

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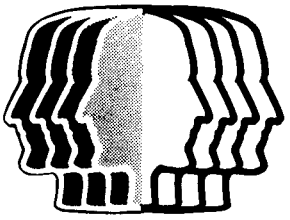

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intelligent regulation. What we need is not a free market but a fair market. . . .

If you've heard about "code gaming" at all, you probably assume it is an activity of the fellows at the National Security Agency, the CIA, the KGB—or perhaps something the Walker family plays around the fire on a cozy winter evening. In fact, it's none of the above.

It's a game doctors play. As they fill out insurance forms, doctors choose various codes to describe what they have done for the patient. By, for example, using the code for a three-centimeter mole to describe one of two centimeters, they can increase their income by $190 for the same surgical procedure. . . .

The latest revelation in the HUD scandal concerns one Paul Marguglio, who as executive director of the Passaic, New Jersey, Housing Authority was paid a total of $246,000 for one year's work. His secret was that, in addition to serving as executive director, he also was modernization director, contracting officer, and purchasing officer for the Authority and received salaries for each job. . . .

Last year, Californians who were angered by their inability to get state employees to answer phone calls persuaded the state's legislature to pass a law requiring that bureaucrats answer the phone within 10 rings. These people obviously aren't fans of "Yes, Minister." Otherwise they would not have been surprised at this result of the new legislation:

A call to the state Department of Motor Vehicles was answered after just two rings. But then it was put on hold for three minutes and 40 seconds while a recorded apology played 10 times. When the caller complained, the state employee who finally answered offered this comfort: "That's actually not bad. I've heard of people waiting 20 and 30 minutes." . . .

Thanks to Pat Moynihan, one of *The Washington Monthly*'s oldest concerns—the unfair burden that the Social Security tax imposes on low-income workers and on struggling businesses—is now widely recognized. What is still overlooked is the *Monthly*'s solution to the problem—finance Social Security with an increase in the income tax on affluent individuals and corporations.

Where are the radical intellectuals and populists who used to advocate soaking the rich? My guess is that most of them have joined the enemy and now are hoping the capital gains tax will be lowered so they can buy that BMW. Whatever the reason, their silence is deafening. Last month, I urged a much higher estate tax on large inheritances and I have yet to get a single letter agreeing with me.

Is it possible that people really believe higher taxes on the wealthy would discourage economic growth? If so, all they have to do is look at the experience of the 1940s and 1950s to realize that high taxes and growth are not incompatible. We don't have to go as high as taxes were then, but, among other things, a rate of 38 percent for incomes above $100,000 —which is what the rate was just three years ago—rising to 50 percent for incomes above $300,000, much less than the top rate of the forties and fifties, seems fair to me. The affluent would still lead a comfortable life. There would still be economic incentives. The extra dollar the rich man makes would not be confiscated. He would be able to keep 50 cents of each of those dollars. Besides, wise men throughout human history have discovered, as Michael Lewis did at the end of *Liar's Poker,* that "the proposition that the more money you earn, the better the life you are leading, [is] refuted by too much hard evidence to the contrary." That better life comes from loving and being loved and from doing work you enjoy and respect. . . .

—*Charles Peters*

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Renting the Fourth Estate

Why won't the George Wills and Sam Donaldsons disclose the speaking fees that have made celebrity journalism such a growth industry?

by Michael Willrich

Within the genteel caste system of Washington journalism, the Periodical Press Gallery at the Capitol is a bracingly democratic institution, where well-known journalists like *Newsweek*'s Eleanor Clift share the membership rolls with the rank-and-file from *Communications Daily* and *Food Chemical News*. For magazine and newsletter journalists covering the Hill, gallery membership is a necessary privilege. Gallery credentials entitle the holders to brush past Capitol security, observe Senate and House debates from the press gallery, and have phone messages taken for them by congressional employees. Keeping watch over the gallery is an elected Executive Committee of Correspondents, whose primary mission is to make sure the passes don't fall into the hands of lobbyists and other influence-peddlers.

In December 1988, the gallery erupted. Depending on who you talk to, the issue was professionalism, privacy, or the First Amendment. The trouble started when the Executive Committee issued new disclosure forms requiring the 1,500 members to list the sources (not amounts) of their nonsalary income, including honoraria for appearances on government-funded broadcast programs like Voice of America and fees for speeches to industry groups, labor unions, and lobbies. Congress had handed down the disclosure rule years before, and the committee, concerned that gallery journalists were earning more and more of their income from honoraria, voted to enforce the measure. But a lot of gallery members didn't much like the idea. By the time the dust had settled, four members of the committee had been ousted—their seats filled by dissenters—and the revamped disclosure form had been chucked out the window.

The outside fees controversy reached a boil last April, when Eleanor Randolph, the *Post*'s media reporter, wrote a front-page story revealing the speaking fees of many of Washington's most sought-after journalists. The public learned that the $2,000 honoraria then routinely accepted by congressmen were peanuts compared with the speaking fees landed by their critics in the Fourth Estate. David Gergen of *U.S. News and World Report* took home up to $5,000 for speaking to groups like SRI International and United Technologies Atlantic & Pacific Advisory Councils; commentator Patrick Buchanan pulled in $10,000 for each of "24 to 30" speeches a year;

Michael Willrich is associate editor of Washington City Paper. *Bill Yelverton provided research assistance for this article.*

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Time's Hugh Sidey and columnist Jack Anderson reportedly earned $10,000 a pop; for the *Post*'s David Broder, a speech to the American Stock Exchange was worth at least $5,000; William Safire of *The New York Times* made $18,000 for a single speech to Southeastern Electric. What Randolph didn't point out, however, was that the speaking fees trickle down to lesser-known journalists, who may give only a few talks each year but are as open to potential conflicts of interest as their more renowned colleagues.

> "We're not elected," says *Washington Post* National Editor Robert Kaiser. "We're not living on public money. We have no state power to exercise." Tell that to Nixon.

Many journalists didn't take kindly to the scrutiny they received last winter. Morton Kondracke, a *New Republic* writer and a regular performer on the "McLaughlin Group," scoffed at the honoraria debate in a *TNR* column. Kondracke, who refused to reveal his own earnings, condemned financial disclosure for journalists as "an exercise in voyeurism and an invasion of privacy."

Kondracke's response pointed to the heart of the matter, but never reached it. Of course voyeurism alone could never justify the intrusion of disclosure, in the same way it could never justify riffling through a senator's checkbook. But there are other, more legitimate considerations at work that demand the disclosure of journalists' outside income. Journalists, like senators, are people with great influence; and journalists, like senators, are people—and therefore subject to temptation and influence. As is the case with politicians and industrialists, private interest money can bend the work of journalists in inappropriate ways—not necessarily through overt quid pro quos, but more subtly, particularly through the enticements and distractions of fame. So why shouldn't the subtle force fields of power and influence analyzed so closely in politics and government be mapped in the case of journalists too? In journalism, such influence can make columns and broadcasts less truthful. And surely playing with the reported truth can be a greater evil than playing some of the political games that journalists attack so vehemently.

Sure, Kondracke was ticked-off. You'd be mad too if people automatically assumed that anyone who paid you owned you. But Kondracke's anger blinded him to something important: The very thing he doesn't like done to him, he blithely does to politicians all the time. Just a few months after defending himself on honoraria, Kondracke wrote a story in which he criticized Lloyd Bentsen for wanting to charge business lobbyists $10,000 a head to have breakfast with him—a perfectly legal activity, although one that would have created apparent conflicts of interest. It seems never to have occurred to Kondracke that there was nothing wrong with Bentsen sharing a breakfast table with a lobbyist as long as nothing was going on under it. Where was all Kondracke's righteous anger about unfair assumptions when they were applied not to himself but to a politician?

No sting for the WASPs

A point raised by disclosure's opponents and proponents alike is that journalists are not government officials. As *Post* National Editor Robert Kaiser puts it, "I'm not prepared to accept a total equating of us and them. We're not elected. We're not living on public money. We have no state power to exercise." Tell that to Richard Nixon.

Kaiser's paper drove a president from office. Though journalists have no "state power," they do possess awesome power of their own. Sure, Ted Kennedy can vote on a product liability bill that could make or break the Widget industry; but Ted Koppel can wreak equal havoc on the Widget-makers by focusing a *Nightline* episode on the hazards of this year's model. It's not necessary to conjure up hypothetical cases. Ronald Reagan could never have denied Gary Hart the Democratic nomination and turned him into a laughingstock; the *Miami Herald* did it in one weekend. And when reporters lie down on the job, society suffers. Evidence of widespread corruption at HUD was available for years before the press finally gave the problem full treatment. Who can doubt that today's tough coverage has accelerated the government's HUD investigation?

Bafflingly, many of the high-profile journalists I spoke with denied that journalists have much power.

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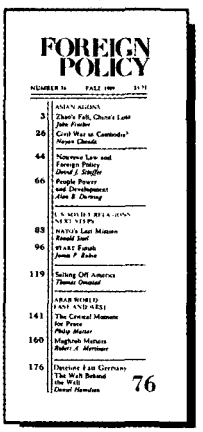

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(Robert Novak and James J. Kilpatrick were particularly adamant on this point. Kilpatrick's disclaimer is remarkable, since in his role as an anti-integration editor at the *Richmond News Leader* he almost single-handedly delayed by several years the extension of civil rights to Virginia's blacks. A more telling assessment came from Patrick Buchanan when, arguing against the propriety of sex on television, he told "Crossfire" viewers, "The suggestion that this powerful medium doesn't influence behavior is absurd.") Even if journalists don't cop to their power, the organizations that hire them to speak are aware of it. The American Association of Retired Persons, the formidable old-folks lobby, has booked ABC News correspondent Carole Simpson for a June convention in Orlando. The topic of Simpson's speech? "The Media's Impact in Shaping Public Policy." The AARP refused to disclose the fee.

For some reason, journalists accept the idea that they are the kind of people insulated from money's subtle influences even though they wouldn't buy that line from, say, the president of the United States. The unspoken argument is that some people are just above that sort of thing. It's an attitude shared by "classy" people everywhere—from politicians like James Baker to members of the New York literati.

Virtually no press criticism was aimed at the elegant and WASPy Baker while he was making decisions as treasury secretary regarding Third World debt that protected his multimillion dollar holdings in Chemical Bank. Compare that performance to the way rough-hewn Bert Lance was ridden out of town for much more paltry banking sins.

And some years ago, when it was pointed out to Jason Epstein that the magazine he founded (*The New York Review of Books*) ran a disproportionate number of reviews of titles published by the firm of which he was vice president (Random House), he responded not with a simple explanation but with a torrent of famous authors' names and a question: "Do you understand how deeply your article offends those writers?" The subtext of Epstein's reply was: Literary people are special. By contrast, wouldn't Epstein immediately think the worst in a similar case involving public officials or, ugh, paving contractors? Maybe he could easily have explained away the apparent impropriety in his situation. But why should he think that he, unlike these less elegant types, was above being questioned about it?

National Suppress Club

There's nothing inherently corrupting about imparting wit and wisdom to the AARP, or anyone else. But, like congressmen and publishers, journalists aren't immune to money. The case of R. Foster Winans—the *Wall Street Journal* writer who got $31,000 (and eventually 18 months in jail) for keeping a broker apprised of the upcoming subjects of his influential column—comes to mind. As does the case of the hundreds of journalists who flew to Disney World for, essentially, a luxury vacation at Disney's expense—and then wrote favorable stories about it. And despite snippy comments made by some reporters who jetted to Morocco at Malcolm Forbes's expense, how many of them will ever write a meaningful tough story about him?

Like Baker and Epstein, a journalist should have to confront hard questions about an apparent conflict

The Washington Monthly Discloses

With this issue, *The Washington Monthly* inaugurates what it intends to make an annual tradition of disclosing the honoraria received by its staff. We hope that all other media sources of news and opinions will join us in this effort.

The members of The Washington Monthly *staff made paid speeches to these organizations during 1989:*

University of North Carolina Fine Arts Festival
Sunday Magazine Editors Conference
13th Annual CORO Foundation Public Affairs Awards Dinner
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Foreign Policy Research Institute
American University Washington Semester Program

In none of these appearances did the honorarium exceed $1,500.

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of interest; in order to ask those questions, the rest of us need to know when that appearance exists. But while journalists will assume the worst as they hound a Bert Lance to the ends of the earth at the slightest whiff of scandal, most still bristle when you want to chat about *their* finances.

For a clear example of this double standard, how about this: Rowland Evans and Robert Novak's twice-yearly forums usually feature several government officials—this year's roster included Speaker of the House Thomas Foley. Because such officials fear the power of these columnists, they're typically afraid not to come, and they're afraid to accept a fee. So they come for free. You can't say the same for Evans and Novak—they get a fee all right, and they won't tell you what it is.

That attitude is earning Washington's journalists a reputation for hypocrisy. In swearing in the new president of the National Press Club recently, Senator John Glenn asked, "Do you pledge that you and your fellow journalists will continue to demand that all politicians get no pay raise, reveal their incomes, and stop taking honoraria—while steadfastly, sanctimoniously refusing to do any of those things yourselves?"

Money talks, everyone talks

Despite the possibilities for wrongdoing presented by honoraria, the truth is that the great quid pro quo—for the case of a journalist who sold his soul for an honorarium—is pretty much a red herring. Cases in which the appearance of a conflict actually reflects wrongdoing are infinitesimally rare; a lot of the time, trade associations and the like invite big-name journalists not out of sinister motives but merely because they think the journalists are the kinds of speakers their members want to hear. That's probably why in my research on honoraria, I couldn't find a real conflict. I did find one apparent conflict, which I'll get to in a moment.

Journalists try to use this paucity of troubling cases of conflict of interest to torpedo the idea of disclosure. "Where's the crime?" asks *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen. "Habeus corpus, baby. Where's the body?" Of course, there's something fishy about this argument coming from any journalist who's against disclosure. After all, if you don't tell me about your apparent conflicts, how can I determine which ones are real?

Although few actually sell out in order to deliver a group's party line, journalists are hardly immune to committing sins of omission, leaving out details or even whole stories as a result of their paid association with these organizations. The pressure on journalists to trim their sails this way is real: According to Joe Cosby, head of Cosby Bureau International, one of the "top five" speaking bureaus in the nation, "It is not unusual for an industry group to say about a journalist, 'This person did an article that is not favorable to our industry. We don't want him.' We hear that a lot."

Senator John Glenn asked, "Do you pledge that you and your fellow journalists will continue to demand that all politicians reveal their incomes and stop taking honoraria—while steadfastly, sanctimoniously refusing to do any of those things yourselves?"

But a more general effect of honoraria on the Washington press corps has been the creation of a new class: the celebrity journalists. Over the past 20 years, journalists have learned to pump up their speaking fees, not by pandering to different trade groups, but by pandering to television.

Although reporters have accepted speaking fees for decades (remember Sheridan Whiteside in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*?), the major rise of journalist honoraria is associated with the invention of the tie-clipped microphone, as George Will's career attests. Will made his mark as a columnist during the Watergate scandal with tough and insightful commentary on Richard Nixon, but he made himself a celebrity on the pundits' roundtable, "Agronsky and Company," by skewering opponents with baroque one-liners. *The New Republic* reported in 1986 that Will earned between $12,000 and $15,000 a speech for an estimated 40 speeches per year. Most estimates place Will's annual income at $1 million or more. (Will did not return several phone calls.)

An entire school of journalists has mimicked Will's two-step approach to inside-the-Beltway star-

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dom: Make a big enough mark in your column to secure TV appearances; make a big enough mark on TV to secure far more lucrative speaking jobs. Suitably, the best term for this practice—"buckraking"—was coined by *The New Republic*, where several buckrakers mold their office hours around their camera calls and speaking engagements.

> *Sam Donaldson gave away a big piece of the game when he told Jonathan Alter that disclosing his income would hurt his credibility as "the guy in the trenchcoat."*

With a few exceptions, the journalists who command the highest speaking fees are familiar faces on shows like the "McLaughlin Group," "Crossfire," and "Washington Week in Review." Following Will's model, the newcomers to buckraking know that a $250 or $500 appearance on a TV panel may lead to a $5,000 speaking fee. "McLaughlin Group"ies Kondracke and Fred Barnes regularly take their TV personas on the road, recreating their ornery made-for-TV debates before packed houses. Hard work made Barnes and Kondracke prominent journalists; television made them stars.

It also made them hot commodities for Cosby Bureau International. "They do a marvelous job," says Cosby, who books the Kondracke-Barnes debates. "Maaaaarvelous."

Last year, Cosby's firm dispatched 130 speakers to more than 1,000 conventions, seminars, and conferences around the country. David Brinkley, R.W. Apple, Ed Bradley, Jack Germond, Kondracke, and Barnes are on Cosby's roster of speakers-for-hire. As are Joyce Carol Oates, John Tower, and Bud McFarlane. (That Barnes and Tower—the journalist and the public figure he has covered—can be rented through the same bureau is yet another odd feature of celebrity journalism.) The journalists' fees range from $4,000 to $25,000, their customers from the Washington Antique Show to IBM. On the morning of our interview, Cosby had been dealing with a "big Boston financial group" who wanted ABC's Pierre Salinger to spice up a private meeting. Salinger's rate: $25,000 plus a ticket on the Concorde to fly him in from London.

Not just any journalist is welcome in Cosby's stable. "We have people that are clamoring to do this, and we can't do anything for them," he says. "We are a *celebrity* lecture bureau."

Cosby is not forthcoming when asked what his celebrities make, but he gushes when asked what makes a celebrity. "It's name recognition," he explains. "There are only five well-known quarterbacks at any given time. There are 25 journalists who are known *well* at any given time. A journalist has a longer lifespan than a quarterback."

Celebrity journalists may not fret about knee injuries, but they do have to hustle to keep on top of their game. That would be fine—except that the standards for achieving and maintaining fame are not necessarily the standards for producing good journalism. Suppose that a major Washington figure is sued by a former female employee for verbal and physical sexual harassment. Further suppose that there is enough substance to her charges that the powerful figure settles the suit for a six-figure sum. If the man in our lawsuit were a senator, there would be a pool of reporters camped outside his house and sifting through his garbage; but the lawsuit really happened and the man was not a senator but John McLaughlin. Now quick, how many stories about the episode have you seen? Could it be that there's this consensus silence because Washington is lousy with would-be celebrity journalists who would sooner cover Interior than hurt their chances to someday get on "McLaughlin Group"? And could it be that journalists avoid doing tough stories about their peers because they fear tough stories in return about themselves? In short, even though most Washington journalists are just as much public figures as the senators they frequently sit in judgment on, hardly any of them want to be judged that way.

Celebrity status affects reporting. James Doyle, a veteran Washington correspondent who is now vice president of the Times Journal Co., recently unearthed evidence of this when he polled a slew of Washington journalists for a piece in *Neiman Reports* [see "Journalists, Inc." p. 20]. One unnamed columnist confessed to Doyle that TV and speaking engagements gradually altered his (or her) journalism. "Last year I made more than my salary in speech fees," the columnist wrote. "Most of the speeches arise from long, familiar tenure on a television panel

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3. Single Family Task Force - Attached is a status report on the actions of the Single Family Task Force. The report was done for Bob Nipp as background for the press and is necessarily overly positive and vague. Judy Hofmann is trying to implement things as quickly as possible but is concerned that Housing is dropping the ball on a couple of the recommendations.

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show . . . . As for my column it is less and less about my area and more about national affairs that are right for the television show and speeches . . . . It is quite possible that the net result is a wider gap between me and my readers."

The confession is telling. To sustain celebrity status, journalists change their roles as reporters. This influence shows up in other ways as well. Shows like "Crossfire" demand a Left versus Right framework for issues that's increasingly clichéd. On TV panels like McLaughlin's, vital issues of the day are given the sort of thumbs-up, thumbs-down treatment people expect from Siskel and Ebert. And if you want to come off on TV as an expert, you'd better skip the thorny pros and cons of Social Security and instead discourse on the latest Gallup Poll on Social Security or today's vote on the Social Security bill. That's why chat show discussions tend to revolve around the politics of an issue, rather than the issue itself. The show reduces journalism to sound bites—the very practice journalists often deride when the soundbiter is a politician.

In other words, celebrity journalism degrades the whole realm of political writing by injecting it with extra doses of TV-caliber superficiality. The main impact of this on journalism is a general decrease in intellectual honesty and careful reasoning. Maybe that's why most celebrity journalists have such a hard time dealing thoughtfully and logically with the issue of honoraria. Here's Robert Novak's "analysis" of the issue: "I'll tell you what it is. I think it's a fantasy of little weenies around this town, who can't hardly pay their rent and who are a little bit jealous." Thoughtfulness and logic just are not highly valued when the little red light goes on.

In my research, I did come across one *apparent* conflict of interest: David Whitman, a senior editor at *US News and World Report,* seemed to have adopted a more conservative bent in his reporting on homelessness after he accepted an honorarium for a panel

Journalists, Inc.

by James S. Doyle

Sam Donaldson: What is your salary?
Reverend Jerry Falwell: My salary is $100,000, Sam.
Falwell: How much do you make, Sam?
Donaldson: Well, I make quite a bit, Reverend Falwell.

. . . A *Los Angeles Times* poll showed in 1985 that almost half of newspaper journalists but only 18 percent of the general public had incomes over $40,000. The pollsters, I.A. Lewis and William Schneider, wrote in *Public Opinion* magazine, "What we end up with is an impression of newspaper journalists as something like 'super yuppies.' They are emphatically liberal on social issues and foreign affairs, distrustful of establishment institutions (government, business, labor), and protective of their own economic interests."

I think it's fair to say, although I can't prove it, that many print journalists in Washington earn more than Supreme Court justices, cabinet officials, governors, mayors, full professors, school superintendents, and other community leaders. It didn't used to be so.

Is this why journalists have not pressed an agenda that would focus on the economic problems of many Americans—including a generation of immigrants not offered the same opportunities as my parents and me? Can one be so comfortable, living among such wealth, and not avert one's eyes and professional attention from the problems of the less affluent?

Frank Mankiewicz, vice chairman of Hill and Knowlton in Washington, says, "Consider the fact that the drafting and the debate on the 1986 Tax Reform Act was covered for the first time by journalists, most of whom had a serious stake in the outcome. Securities regulation, restoration of capital gains tax favoritism, government attitudes toward real estate, student loans—all of these matters are no longer academic and no longer neutral for almost all our colleagues who cover these stories."

James Fallows, the *Atlantic* editor just returned from a tour in Asia, remarked on public radio that American cities are like Manila in the degrees of homelessness and poverty evident on their streets. "Where is the Izzy Stone of the homeless?" asks Ronald Ostrow of the *Los Angeles Times.*

As a depression baby I look at the new affluence,

see page 22

James S. Doyle, a veteran Washington, D.C., correspondent, is now vice president of The Times Journal Company of Springfield, Virginia, and editorial director of the Times group. This article is excerpted from Nieman Reports *of winter, 1989.*

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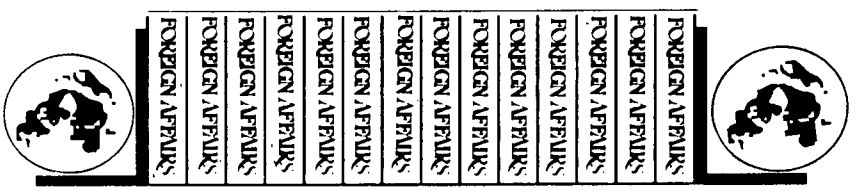

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discussion held by the Heritage Foundation. But when I called Whitman up, it didn't take him long to convince me that the money hadn't warped his viewpoint: for one thing, he informed me that the fee was only $250; for another, he directed me to a story he had written before he spoke at the Heritage Foundation that displayed the same bent.

Whitman didn't suggest for a moment that he was angry to be asked about his fee. "I've charged liberal groups for speaking to them, too. If I have to prepare a speech, which takes me time, I feel I ought to be paid an honorarium," he says. "As you can tell from the fact that I've told you all this, I also don't feel that it's terrible to disclose who I get money from."

Ban the ban

Ideally, that's how disclosure would work: some nit-picking watchdog, sifting through the public record, detects an apparent conflict; he calls it to the attention of the journalist or his editor; the conflict is explained away, and the watchdog, slightly sheepish, concludes the interview; or, if the conflict isn't adequately explained, the journalist is hung out to dry.

Sounds simple, but no one's doing it. Accepting speaking fees from interest groups without disclosing them is still routine at most news organizations with Washington outposts, including the *Miami Herald*, the *Richmond Times Dispatch, USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune, The New York Times*, CNN, ABC, NBC, National Public Radio, *Time, Newsweek,* and *The New Republic*. Typically, before committing to an outside appearance, most journalists must get permission from their editor or bureau chief, and they can't take fees from organizations or individuals they cover. *BusinessWeek* and the *National Journal* are alone among the Washington media outlets in forbidding the practice. *U.S. News & World Report* has been reconsidering its laissez-faire honoraria policy for the past six months.

The top brass at *The Washington Post* are in a similar quandary. Richard Harwood, the *Post* ombudsman, says he has devised a cure: banning speaking honoraria entirely. Kaiser, the paper's national editor, says the *Post* still hasn't decided what to do but insists that a total ban on honoraria is not one of the options on the table.

It shouldn't be an option. Virtually any relationship between journalists and others can create the appearance of conflict of interest to those who don't adequately understand what's behind that appearance. So to say that honoraria are never acceptable is, in effect, to side with the ill-informed. It's always possible to conclude the worst about a reporter covering the president who decides to attend a White House

DOYLE, from page 20

indifference, and excess and it scares me. I wonder if there is a moral kondratieff wave soon to wash over us for our sins of omission, sweeping away our authority and prestige, if not our wealth. I wrote to a number of reporters and writers, most in Washington, and asked if they thought this new affluence, and the celebrity status of many talk show contributors and other journalists, affected the quality and scope of the reporting from Washington. Their answers are worth sharing. For the most part they made a sharp distinction between the journalist as celebrity and the journalist as wealthy. The real problem, almost all agreed, has to do with work habits and the absence of plain old shoe leather. . . .

Hodding Carter III sent along a five-year-old *Wall Street Journal* "Viewpoint" he had written, noting that it "understates how strongly I feel about the subject." The top journalists, the column said, "move in packs with the affluent and powerful to Washington (just doing their job, of course), then swarm with them in the summer to every agreeable spot on the eastern seaboard between Canada and New Jersey. When any three or four sit down together on a television talk show to discuss the meaning of current events, it is not difficult to remember that the least well paid of these pontificators (in whose rank I occasionally fall) makes at least six times more each year than the average American family . . . . The truth is that there is not a hell of a lot of tolerance or empathy among the leading figures of national journalism for outsiders, losers, nonconformists, or seriously provocative political figures or causes.". . .

John Herbers, contributing editor at *Governing* magazine and a distinguished Washington correspondent for *The New York Times* until his retirement two years ago, wrote, "The prevailing orientation of Washington journalists began to change from populist-working middle class to moneyed elite in the early seventies. It took well into the eighties to be fully evident." He offers a personal benchmark for the change, from his days covering urban affairs: "One day a group of us were discussing the government's efforts to bring about a better order of eco-

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dance or a reporter on the Treasury beat who buys Savings Bonds. But does this mean the first man should turn down all such invitations or that the second should stay away from all such investments? No, it only means that reporters have to be prepared to own up to their deeds. It's the George Wills with their secret White House connections (Will helped prepare Ronald Reagan for the debates in 1980 and then on television commented favorably on Reagan's performance, never letting on that he'd had this inside role) and the James Bakers with their hidden financial commitments who should draw our criticism.

For a more sensible solution, Kaiser, Harwood, and the rest of the top management at the *Post* might look to their own Federal Page. The page regularly runs an "Honoraria Scorecard" that charts the honoraria—amounts and sources—accepted by a rotating roster of congressmen and senators. The idea is that readers can decide for themselves if their leaders are being bought.

You don't have to equate Morton Kondracke with Alan Cranston to see that the same sort of disclosure would be good for journalism. The Periodical Press Gallery's disclosure policy was the right idea, but the gallery was the wrong forum. Journalists should not be policed by the government; they should be policed by their readers. News organizations should annually disclose the amounts and sources of honoraria to the public—an honoraria scorecard printed in the publication or kept in an accessible file at television and radio stations would serve the purpose well (see "*The Washington Monthly* Discloses," p. 16). There's just no good reason not to make this information public.

Certainly the celebrity journalist's desire to play the double game of pretending to be an ordinary person subject to only ordinary pressures, while secretly raking in huge sums from all sorts of sources, is not a good reason.

Reporter or flasher?

Sam Donaldson gave away a big piece of the antidisclosure game when he told Jonathan Alter that disclosing his income would hurt his credibility as "the guy in the trenchcoat." That's the whole point. Donaldson isn't just an average reporter in a trenchcoat; making over a million dollars a year affects your outlook on life and could affect your reporting. Sure, disclosure might be embarrassing for Donaldson, but why should famous journalists, unlike other stars, be able to enjoy the benefits of celebrity while suffering none of the costs?

By making journalists more vulnerable to public scrutiny, universal disclosure would not only tend to deter conflicts-of-interest; it would also deter the more insidious effects of the buckraker culture.

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nomic justice—people really did talk about things like that back then." An idea discussed seriously in academic circles was broached—taking away some of the home mortgage tax write-off and using the money for low-income housing. "No one suggested it might be a good idea, even for consideration," Herbers reports. "In the past most everything we had written affected other people, other places." Now higher salaries, television appearances, book contracts, and speaking fees, "put us securely with the haves. The world of the have-nots is a world we no longer know.". . .

Author J. Anthony Lukas writes, "I suspect it is the ability, nay eagerness, of many Washington reporters to socialize with the powerful, to dine at their Georgetown tables and natter at their McLean garden parties, which drains their skepticism and blunts the edge of their reporting. There is also the relentlessly political tone of Washington reporting which leads—except at places like *The Washington Monthly* and *The New Republic*—to a woeful lack of interest in the social, cultural, not to mention economic and class dimensions of what they are writing about."

"I see two problems in Washington journalism," says Lars-Erik Nelson, bureau chief of the New York *Daily News,* "This city has no white working class, no industries, no factories. . . The normal stresses of American life are barely visible here, and apply mostly to a black population on the other side of town." . . .

Joseph C. Goulden, the author and former *Philadelphia Inquirer* bureau chief, is director of media analysis for Accuracy In Media: . . . "Reporters seem to have lost any grasp of the frustrations of blue collar workers and the lower middle-class. The reports on the 'urban poor' and 'farmers' I read in *The Washington Post* and elsewhere remind me of a sociologist's field notes." . . .

Stanley Karnow said, "The real danger is the feeling of self-importance among many reporters. In 1971 when I returned home after years abroad, the national editor of *The Washington Post* said to me: 'There are 25 members of the *Post* national staff and 25 members of *The New York Times* Washington bureau and we are the most powerful people in America.' What hubris!" □

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Celebrity journalists, aware that their readers know the details of their heavy moonlighting schedules, might feel obliged to put a little more time, thought, and kick into their reporting and columns.

On the forms she filled out for the Periodical Press Gallery during its brief reign of disclosure, *Newsweek*'s Clift listed appearances on "The McLaughlin Group," three appearances on the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's television show, participation in a panel before the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, four speeches made to the Congressional Youth Leadership Council, and eight appearances on the United States Information Agency's roundtable "America Today." These outside activities take away from the time Clift can dedicate to her primary responsibility—reporting. Readers (and editors) deserve to know how thin she's spreading herself.

Once subject to mandatory disclosure, some journalists will completely forgo honoraria they would have accepted before. (That's why they're objecting now to the prospect of disclosure.) Aware that the details would be published, Deborah Norville probably would not have read "news" about tobacco sales plans and interviewed company "guests" for a Phillip Morris sales conference in Hawaii.

But disclosure would place an equally heavy burden on the rest of us. While it's fine to let our suspicions be aroused when David Whitman accepts a speaking fee from the Heritage Foundation, we owe him the respect of listening to his explanation, presuming the mere appearance of a conflict of interest until it's proven to be the real thing.

So, through disclosure, buckrakers will be deterred and villains will be caught—or, more likely, opportunistic villains will be denied their opportunity. But maybe there truly are no real conflicts of interest. And maybe celebrity journalists can bear the burdens of stardom without lowering their standards for reporting and writing. Perhaps the public will have its confidence in the media boosted by the discovery that, as some buckrakers insist, journalist honoraria in no way compromise reporting. Either way, the profession—and the public—wins. □

WHO'S WHO

Most of the environmentalists who were disappointed that **George Bush**'s speech at Georgetown University took such a tepid stand on global warming are aware of **John Sununu**'s role in the last-minute watering down of the bolder position recommended by EPA chief **William Reilly**. What they don't know is that Reilly has another important enemy in the administration, **Richard Darman**, whose dislike, unlike Sununu's, is personal rather than ideological. . . .

Bush's sop to the environmentalists is a presidential endorsement of the proposal to elevate EPA to cabinet status. But insiders dismiss the move as window dressing, the only practical effect of which will be to improve the status of social events to which Reilly will be invited. . . .

Speaking of Sununu, one thing that has not endeared him to his associates in the White House is his invitation to them to tattle on colleagues responsible for leaks. . . .

Three past chairmen of the joint chiefs of staff—**David C. Jones**, **John W. Vessey**, and **William J. Crowe Jr.** —agree that we do not need to deploy the MX and Midgetman missiles. The administration proposes to spend $3 billion on the two weapons in the next fiscal year alone. . . .

Louis Sullivan, the secretary of Health and Human Services, had been regarded as a conventional bureaucrat by most observers but has won new respect with his successful attack on RJR Nabisco's Uptown cigarette. . . .

Carol Crawford, the OMB official who was responsible for HUD in the Reagan administration and who was asleep at the switchboard when the worst scandals were going on, much to our dismay as readers may recall, was promoted by Bush to a high position at Justice where she was in charge of the legislative affairs office. But last month her past—or Dick Thornburgh's distaste for leaks, of which she was suspected, or concern about her high-handed treatment of Congress, or what she describes as her "sense that the job is not right for me"—caught up with her. . . . and she resigned.

In—*Health and Human Services:* Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation—**Martin H. Gerry.** *Justice:* Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights—**John R. Dunne.** Inspector General—**Richard J. Hankinson.** *Agencies and Commissions:* Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission—**Ervin S. Duggan.** Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board—**James L. Kolstad.** Administrator, Rural Electrification Administration—**Gary C. Byrne.**

Out—*White House:* Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy—**William L. Roper.** *Justice:* Assistant Attorney General—**Carol T. Crawford.**

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But You Might Try John Walker

The CIA recently paid $200,000 to commission a sculpture for its Langley headquarters that will feature an encrypted passage from a spy novel. Only President Bush, CIA Director William Webster, and the sculptor will have the decoding key.

Exactly

FCC chairman Al Sikes is considering adding a private bathroom to his office at an estimated cost of $16,000, in order to avoid using a nearby public lavatory. "All he is doing is bringing himself into line with other federal officials at his level," said an FCC spokesman.

Sony Owns the Landfill

The Christian Science Monitor reported that for tax reasons, Apple Computer Corporation recently buried 2,700 unsold Lisa computers in a Utah landfill rather than donate them to schools or third-world countries.

We Can't Wait to See the Menu at the Ft. Bragg Taco Bell

In the aftermath of its invasion of Panama, the U.S. military retracted its earlier account of American troops having discovered 50 kilograms of cocaine in a house once occupied by General Manuel Noriega. The Pentagon admitted that the seized materials were actually tamales.

And Surgeon General Declares Loss of Life Leading Cause of Death

According to a recent report from the Bureau of Statistics, "Low earnings seem to be the key reason why someone who usually works full time is a member of a poor family."

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Shakespeare on the Beach

Mr. Vice President, you're no Prince Hal.

by Timothy Noah

[T]he vice president and his wife made a surprise visit to the Cineplex Odeon Outer Circle Sunday evening . . . . Dan Quayle and his wife Marilyn were coming to see "Henry V."

—*The Washington Post* "Personalities" column, January 9, 1990

[Act IV, Scene iii. The English camp at Agincourt.]

Enter Gloucester, Bedford, Exeter, Erpingham with all his Host, Salisbury, and Westmoreland.

West. O that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work today!

Enter the King.

K. Danf. Huh? Who said that? Let me say this along the lines of response to your—while it's true that with more people it's easier, less risk of, you might be slain in battle. And that would certainly be unfortunate. But I view the situation as much different. And let me explain what I mean by this.

If we are marked to pass on, well, that's it. It will happen, and that's unfortunate. Lookit, these things occur. I don't choose to dwell on that. I take a more forward-looking, uh, look at this situation. If you live, I view this as it's better if there are fewer. You live, more die, and I know that's unfortunate, but not for you. You're impacted with a greater share of honor than would otherwise be the case. So I would ask you to wish, prayerfully wish or pray or whatever your faith may be, that we have not one man more and let us stick to the numbers we've got now. They're good numbers, English numbers, English, English numbers.

Now, as you know, today is the Feast of Crispian. It's a day I like to spend with Marilyn and the kids, maybe in the morning out on the fairway, and I know some like to criticize that but this is how I relax, and I don't intend to apologize, be apologetic of that.

But as I was saying, we have to work on a holiday, and none of us prefers, we would rather another day, and we are here. But one thing about my generation, our generation, is looking to the future. We have a very strong orientation along the lines of thinking toward the future. And that is what this great country is all about.

So, as we look to the future, we see that some of us will be blessed to outlive this day and come safely home, as I came after—and I do not apologize and I served my country well in the National Guard. But that is past, and this is future. So in the future when this time of year rolls around again, as I am confident it will, those of us who are fortunate to survive today will stand and salute whenever they hear the name Crispian. Or some prefer Crispin, it amounts to the same thing because they were Roman brothers as I'm sure you know, God-fearing Christians and freedom fighters and entrepreneurs in the shoe industry, which was important to, important part of the manufacturing sector during that time, now past. And this is future.

And let me say this. You who are here today. I don't mean the ones who die, and of course we don't know which because that will play out. It has to play out. But if you live, many years from now, when you are a senior citizen, every year you will—your neighbors will come to your house and you will say, "Tomorrow is Elaine Crispin." Elaine Crispian. That is, St. Crispian, or if you prefer, Crispian. Crispin. Then you take off your shirt and show off your scars. And that would I think be a very rewarding and patriotic experience.

You will get old—I don't mean the dead ones, but the others because they're the future which is what we are, where the concern is really what it's all about. So they will get on in years. And you, they, will become forgetful and perhaps an Alzheimer's

Timothy Noah is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly. *Research assistance was provided by William Shakespeare.*

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situation will develop. But you'll still remember what you did today, because today is going to be very memorable. And famous, because when you're a war hero, that gets attention in the media. So you will get media attention. And every year on Saint—on this day, when we revisit it in future years, many or rather few of us will, some, all of us, we will think the same thought. And that thought is this.

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. We band together as brothers, bandy brothers, happy brothers. Few brothers but happy brothers, happy band, happy bandy band. Happy is happy, band is band, few is few. In other words, few is better than happy.

And the others—not dead, but back home in England, back in bed, in England—they will feel accursed for not being here and, frankly, their manhood will be something they may want to wonder about. And I'm not going to make any further elaborations about that.

Once more onto the beach!

Exuent.

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This is the second of two articles on why airline deregulation has failed.

Flying the Unfriendly Skies, II

Big airlines smother the competition through unfair gate leases, total control of slots, stacked computerized reservation systems, and other dirty tricks of the trade.

by David Nather

Ask any executive at a major airline about the dwindling number of carriers in the industry, and you'll probably get the same reassuring explanation: The airline industry is vigorously competitive, just as the founding fathers of deregulation intended. The airlines that failed were forced out by their own ineptitude. "People may look at the numbers and say there aren't enough carriers, but the carriers that are there are fighting tooth and nail," says USAir spokesman Dave Shipley. At American Airlines, the attitude is even more defensive. "What we keep saying to the regulators is, 'Look, you keep telling us to compete, but every time we do, you complain," says David Schwarte, American's associate general counsel.

The airlines do compete—if your idea of competing is locking your rivals out of the stadium. Since deregulation, the major carriers have learned to survive by making up new rules. They've figured out how to exploit the natural barriers to entry at airports—limited gate space and limited airspace—in order to lock out new competitors or to charge enormous fees to let them in. And they've come up with clever marketing scams to lure customers away from other airlines, often by manipulating the information the customers receive. These tricks of the trade may have started out as attempts at honest competition, but they're smothering the smaller, would-be competitors—and not because the little carriers offer lousy service, but because they simply don't have the leverage or the resources to play the same tricks. The result is clear: The airline industry is becoming less and less competitive all the time.

All of this is happening because Congress didn't back up its experiment in deregulation with enough safeguards to control the inevitable excesses of a free-market aviation environment. The airline industry isn't like the restaurant business. The demand for flights is certainly out there, but the supply can't match it. Why not? Because space for flying, to a much greater degree than space for eating, is a limited commodity; an airport can serve only so many customers at one time before the safety of the system goes out the window. And as access to the "marketplace" becomes more limited and more precious, it becomes easier for the big guys to muscle the little guys out of the sky.

Now, government and industry officials are starting to talk about how to correct the problems. As usual, the debate is getting clouded by ideology. If you're on the left, you probably never liked the idea of deregulation to begin with, and you'd just as soon go back to the old system. If you're on the right or work for a big airline (or both), you'd throw yourself off a cliff before you'd listen to a word about new regulations. Both sides are overreacting. The answer isn't simply to keep the new system or to go back to the old one. The answer is to make the current system more competitive through some smart, limited government controls. To figure out what new rules the industry needs, would-be regulators need to take

David Nather is a reporter for The Dallas Morning News.

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a long, hard look at the games that only big airlines can play. Call them "scams of scale."

Barred gates

For starters, Congress forgot to follow through on one important front: the airlines' contracts with their host airports. Even before deregulation, airlines had gotten some powerful advantages in writing—long-term gate leases and contractual agreements that give a dominant airline a strong voice in an airport's expansion plans. Once the industry was deregulated, these contracts gave the entrenched carriers an overwhelming advantage: the ability to box out competition.

Take gate leases. At many airports, the airlines that grabbed up gates will hold them for a long time; some of the leases last from 20 to 30 years. In fact, according to a General Accounting Office study, 54 percent of the current leases won't expire for at least 10 years. Why so much time? Because airport operators needed capital investments in their facilities, and they knew airlines would be more likely to cough up if they held exclusive rights to their gates for long enough to justify their investment. Now, however, the leases let airlines hang onto their gates for another reason: to keep them away from potential competitors. Airlines sometimes won't give up their gates even if they're not using them. Continental did this at Denver, holding on to 14 idle gates rather than returning them to the city. That's why Midway Airlines is pushing for minimum-use agreements at all airports, which would simply require airlines that own gates to use them or lose them.

But the present system doesn't mean a new airline can never get its hands on a gate. It can, sometimes, sublease gates from an obliging owner . . . for a small fee. In Detroit, Southwest Airlines subleases gates from Northwest at a rate of $150 per flight—*19 times* what Northwest pays for its gate space. And the owning airline may insist that its tenant sign a "handling" contract, which forces it to use the owning airline's staff at the gate instead of its own. In his testimony before the Senate aviation subcommittee last year, the GAO's Kenneth Mead said these contracts can force a tenant to pay four times as much as it would if it used its own people. But the new airlines go along, for a good reason. "It's one thing to be able to enter a market," Michael Conway, the president of America West, told me, "but you have to have a gate to pull up to when you get there."

Besides handing out long-term gate leases, airports lured airlines with the "majority-in-interest" clause. This clause rewards the dominant airline for its capital investments by giving it veto power over airport expansion plans it doesn't want to pay for. Imagine that—at a time when the nation's airspace is getting more crowded, and everyone in the industry is looking for ways to expand the capacity of the system, an airline can simply stop an airport from building gates. If an airport were to propose a new terminal designed to make room for other airlines, the dominant carrier could kill the idea. "They may not feel that it's in their best interest to bring in competition," observed Leonard Ginn, vice president of economic affairs at the Airport Operators Council International. So far, there is no case on record of an airline using its majority-in-interest clause single-handedly to block an expansion plan. But then, the airports haven't been on any crusade to build space for competitors, either.

In Detroit, Southwest Airlines subleases gates from Northwest at the rate of $150 per flight—19 times what Northwest pays for its gate space.

Airports have not been the only unwitting accomplices of the big carriers. Uncle Sam also set up an elegant scam for entrenched airlines to exploit: the buying and selling of airport "slots." These are the landing and takeoff reservations that the Federal Aviation Administration created in 1969 to control crowding at four airports: Washington National, Chicago's O'Hare, and New York's JFK and LaGuardia. The idea was to limit the traffic at these rapidly growing airports by assigning each airline a limited number of departure and arrival slots it could use per hour. That system certainly holds down the traffic. But, thanks to deregulation, it also sets up a barrier to the airlines that weren't around when the FAA was passing out slots. So in 1986, the FAA tried a new tactic. It told the airlines at those airports that they could sell their slots—the ones they got for free in 1969—to other airlines. That way, new airlines could come in any time they wanted.

Nothing wrong with that idea, right? Why shouldn't you, an entrenched airline, sell one of your slots to a new carrier so it can come in and draw

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1989

HONORABLE MENTION

From Beirut to Jerusalem. Thomas Friedman. *Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.*

Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars? Jack W. Germond and Jules Witcover. *Warner Books.*

Liar's Poker. Michael Lewis. *Norton.*

Mud Soldiers. George C. Wilson. *Scribners.*

The Death Shift. Peter Elkind. *Viking.*

The Good Times. Russell Baker. *William Morrow.*

Bureaucracy. James Q. Wilson. *Basic Books.*

Fiorello H. LaGuardia and the Making of Modern New York. Thomas Kessner. *McGraw-Hill.*

What's Wrong with Wall Street. Lewis Lowenstein. *Addison-Wesley.*

The Enigma of Japanese Power. Karel van Wolferen. *Alfred A. Knopf.*

More Like Us. James Fallows. *Houghton Mifflin.*

Loyalties. Carl Bernstein. *Simon and Schuster.*

The End of Nature. Bill McKibben. *Random House.*

House and Senate. Ross K. Baker. *Norton.*

The Price of Admiralty. John Keegan. *Viking.*

City for Sale: Ed Koch and the Betrayal of New York. Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett. *Harper and Row.*

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT...

FIORELLO H. LA GUARDIA AND THE MAKING OF MODERN NEW YORK
Thomas Kessner, $24.95, McGraw-Hill (1-800-2-MCGRAW)

With cities everywhere enveloped in an atmosphere of crisis and corruption, this timely, sparkling and definitive biography reminds us how New York City faced a situation a half century ago that was strikingly similar, and found a mayor who was able to turn it all around.

LIAR'S POKER
Rising Through the Wreckage of Wall Street
Michael Lewis, $18.95, Norton

A #1 bestseller nationwide, Liar's Poker "is one of those rare works," writes *Fortune* "that encapsulate and define an era." Tom Wolfe says it's "the funniest book about Wall Street I've ever read." *Newsweek* calls it "a wry wicked account [that] falls somewhere between 'Wealth of Nations' and 'Animal House'" and *The Washington Monthly* agrees: "It's delicious!"

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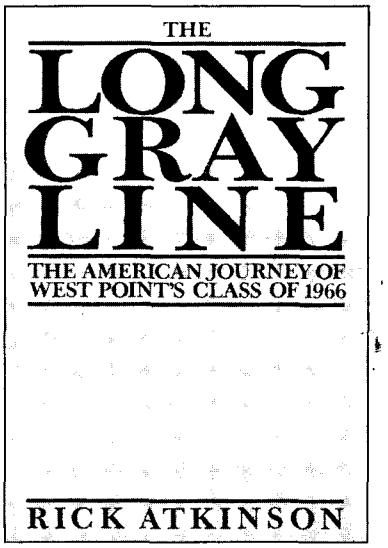

THE LONG GRAY LINE

RICK ATKINSON
Houghton Mifflin

The political book award for 1989 goes to *The Long Gray Line* by Rick Atkinson. In his review of the book for this magazine, James Fallows wrote:

> "Atkinson's book . . . shows that there can be tremendous power in simply telling a story—establishing characters, making the reader care about them, showing what happens next. . . . Atkinson is a truly gifted storyteller, and the material he turns up is so rich. . . ."

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James Q. Wilson, $24.95, Basic Books

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John Keegan, $9.95 (paper), Penguin Books

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away business? Well, the airlines didn't fall for it. By 1988, approximately 80 slots were being sold annually. That's out of 3,800 slots. This doesn't mean slots weren't available; the airlines were quick, as usual, to figure out the system. The buy-sell rule, you see, doesn't allow just buying and selling. It also allows leasing—as in short-term leases that allow you to take your slot back if the lessee starts competing with you. You can probably predict the results: 109 slots leased in 1987, 151 in 1988. The leases usually last 90 days or less and rarely go to a direct competitor. According to the GAO, 15 percent of the leased slots reserved for jets actually go to small turboprops owned by regional carriers.

Big airlines have gotten control of the means by which you find out who's flying where you want to go, at the time you want to go, at a price you can afford.

Without more sales, new airlines can't get access to these major markets, which are badly in need of competition. Midway spent about three years looking for someone willing to sell slots at LaGuardia and Washington National, until it was finally able to buy a total of two at each as part of a $200 million transaction it made with Eastern in September 1989. America West, meanwhile, has never found a seller. "I'm sure that if we offered someone $10 million for a slot, we'd be able to buy it in a second," says a disgruntled Conway. The buy-sell rule just isn't working—a sobering thought when you consider that more airports may soon have to go to slot controls, as their airspaces fill to capacity.

Frequent suckers

In addition to manipulating access to airports, the big airlines have learned to manipulate demand for service with tricks smaller carriers lack the resources to match. You're probably familiar with the most prominent marketing scheme, the frequent-flyer program. That's aimed directly at you, the passenger, and there's no mistaking the message: Fly our airline often enough, and we'll give you a prize. An airline often adds a twist by weighting the mileage points it offers, so that the more you fly with the carrier, the more you will want to fly with it. Your payoff is greater after the second 20,000 miles than in the first 20,000 to discourage any ideas you might have of switching to a competitor. On the surface, there's nothing insidious about these programs. In fact, they seem like exactly the sort of perk one would hope to get out of a free-market airline industry. Unfortunately, beneath the surface, frequent-flier plans—which are aimed principally at business travelers—make no economic or moral sense.

Here's how this scam of scale works: The deal often carries no stipulation that the free flight be used for business travel; since a business customer doesn't care what his flight costs—after all, his office foots the bill—he picks the most attractive frequent flier program, not the cheapest ticket. Then he uses the free flight for a weekend in Cancun, where he gets to lie on the beach and feel pretty clever at the same time. To his thinking, he's managed to pull a fast one, first on his boss (for the first ticket) and then on the airline (for the free one). But the truth is that he's just ripped off his fellow taxpayers, since his boss wrote off the cost of the first flight. And then he's ripped off his fellow air travelers, since the airline has to make up for the the cost of the free ticket somehow. Frequent fliers who aren't flying on business don't exploit other taxpayers, but they do take advantage of their fellow travelers. As *The Wall Street Journal* recently reported, airlines offering frequent-flier plans are "clearly borrowing from the future to pump up their business now." Big airlines hope that by the time that debt comes due, their competitors will have been thoroughly undercut. And then you can pay off that debt—in the form of higher fares.

Big airlines have come up with other ways to mold demand that are even more sophisticated than frequent-flier plans. They've gotten control of the means by which you find out who's flying where you want to go, at the time you want to go, at a price you can afford. Let's start with computerized reservation systems. Ideally, a travel agent would be hooked up to automated flight schedules for all airlines, put together by a neutral party, right? Well, there's no Easter Bunny, and each of the four existing CRSs is owned by one or more domestic airlines.

Most of the 33,000 travel agencies in the country use just one of these systems. Agencies that want to use two or more may run into one of several obstacles—they may be penalized by the owner of their main system for trying to add a second one, for example, or for trying to switch altogether. All the airlines that don't own a given CRS must pay to have flights booked off of it, generally $2 a booking. As a

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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result, the systems, said H. Wayne Berens, president of Revere Travel in New Jersey, "have become kind of a cash cow for the airlines." A cash cow, that is, for the airlines that *own* them; a cash drain for everyone else.

Freebie-jeebies

If an airline has the resources to put together a CRS, it can coast on profits from the system. American Airlines' Sabre system—which, along with United's Covia system, controls about 74 percent of the CRS market—netted the airline $445 million in revenues in 1988.

The stiff penalties for switching systems now make it practically impossible for a smaller airline to get its own system into the marketplace—if it could afford to put one together in the first place. "The technological investment is just astronomically in excess of anything we could put forward," said John Tague, vice-president of marketing and planning for Midway. "Even if you could fund it, the entrenched dominance of the larger carriers would be hard to combat." That dominance won't be letting up any time soon. In fact, American and Delta almost merged their systems in a joint venture last year—until the Justice Department threatened to slap them with an antitrust suit.

CRSs opened up whole new vistas of manipulation for airlines. In 1986 Delta accused American of keeping two sets of flight schedules—one for the CRSs, the other for its own use; the CRS version showed shorter flight times so American's flights would be moved up in the computer display. American backed off of the practice the next year, but said it used the maneuver only because other airlines, including Delta, did it first. (Indeed, the Department of Transportation in April 1987 accused Delta and Eastern of publishing deceptive schedules of their own.) The owning airlines supposedly have rid their CRSs of bias toward themselves, after much wrangling with federal regulators. But travel agents still have to scramble to find you a truly competitive deal on a flight, because the systems remain biased in favor of the dominant airline at an airport. "For example, if it's a flight to Chicago, United's going to come up first, because that's the home carrier there," said Stella Rodriguez, manager of Thomas Cook Travel in Dallas.

And if you're not dealing with a large, multibranch travel agency, you can never be sure that the lowest fare your agent has listed is the lowest fare that's actually available. Nancy Edwards, general manager of Expert Travel, a small agency in Dallas, recalls the time she gave a customer the cheapest nonstop, round-trip flight that was listed under Northwest's flight schedule. The fare was $884. When the customer got back, he demanded to know why the passenger in the next seat, flying the same route, paid a fare in the $300 range. Stunned, Edwards called Northwest to find out why she couldn't find that fare. It turned out the other passenger had bought his ticket from a larger agency—which had access to a lower fare schedule.

CRSs can even distort competition among smaller airlines. Through a technique called "code sharing," a large airline that wants to offer connecting service to destinations to which it doesn't actually have connecting flights will share a two-letter designation with a commuter airline, which keeps travel agents from knowing that part of the route is actually flown by a different airline. This swings a generous part of the business to commuter airlines that "cooperate" with the major ones, giving them a powerful leg up on those that don't.

And then there are old-fashioned forms of manipulation, like freebies for travel agents. The most common is the "travel agent commission override," which is simply a bonus a CRS-owning airline pays the agent for booking seats on its flights rather than someone else's. In a June 1988 survey by *Travel Weekly*, 51 percent of the travel agents surveyed said these overrides "usually" or "sometimes" influence their decision on what flight to recommend. These commissions take the form of free travel on the airline or other benefits.

Hubcapitalism

Keep in mind that these tricks of the trade—manipulating access to the airports and manipulating the demand for service—are just another layer on top of the other factors that are already making some airports virtually free of competition. As Larry Eichel reported in these pages last month ["Flying the Unfriendly Skies"], airlines have been merging with each other and gaining control of hubs; at these concentrated airports, fares have been going up. At Denver, United and Continental used to face a healthy challenge from Frontier Airlines. Then Continental bought Frontier. Before the buyout, the average fare "yield"—or fare per mile—at Denver was anywhere from 9 to 26 percent below the national average. Two years after the buyout, the yields were 8 percent above.

It's true that airlines don't make a huge profit; the average profit margin for carriers is only about 1.6 percent, and most airlines actually lost money in 1986. But low profits don't excuse the one-two combination of anticompetitive practices followed by un-

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reasonable rate hikes. Even Southwest, which is known for its low fares, couldn't resist a little self-indulgence when it bought Muse Air in 1985. Two months before it completed the buyout, Southwest raised its fares $2 on all of its routes except those on which it was competing with Muse. About three weeks after Muse was out of the way, Southwest raised the rest of its fares. And slim profit margins also don't excuse lockstep pricing. Who could forget when Trump and Pan Am both raised their Eastern shuttle fares by $20—*on the same day?*

Air-conditioning

Scams like these are inevitable results of trying to create free-market competition where the market is limited. The constraints imposed by the air traffic control system, combined with the peculiarities of the hub system, make the airline industry an aggregate of regional monopolies waiting for the chance to happen. Trump and Pan Am can raise prices together on the same day and get away with it because they effectively share a monopoly on the Eastern shuttle route.

Don't look to airline executives for solutions. The Air Transport Association, the lobbying arm of the larger airlines, has opposed just about all of the suggested reforms for fear that Congress won't be able to stop at just a few new rules. "Once you start down the path of reregulation, it's that much easier to take the next step," says former Braniff President Howard Putnam. Of course, there always has to be some representative who leaps out to confirm the worst fears about Congress, and this time, it's Howard Metzenbaum. He has introduced a bill that would return the industry to total regulation of fares and routes. But no one in or outside of Congress gives it much chance of passing, and even Metzenbaum didn't seem to like the bill much when he introduced it: "I say with all candor that I am not certain that reregulation is the right solution," he explained, "but I am sure that deregulation was the wrong solution." Thanks a lot.

The best proposal on the table right now is a bill sponsored by Senators John Danforth and John McCain, which in essence calls for limited reregulation. (That's significant in itself: when two Republican senators with anti-government constituencies say we need a few more regulations, we probably do.) Among other things, the bill would allow airports to charge passenger fees to finance expansion projects and ban code-sharing in computerized reservation systems. It would also strengthen the Department of Transportation's power to promote competition among airlines by allowing it to presume that a dominant carrier facing complaints from its competitors has acted in an anti-competitive way, unless it proved otherwise. The DOT wouldn't be able to make this presumption until competition falls below certain levels, which would be determined by the Department of Justice.

The part of the bill that will probably make the airlines scream the loudest is a provision that would force the them to sell their CRSs to neutral parties. An airline that has invested millions of dollars and risked several unprofitable years to develop its own system is not going to want to part with it now that it's turning a profit. But that's the whole problem: The airlines shouldn't be making profits this way. In a competitive environment, no airline should have power over something as crucial as the dissemination of flight schedules and fares. An alternative, suggested by the GAO, is to let the airlines keep their CRSs but simply ban them from charging other airlines for flights booked on their system. But why *should* an airline that built its own system from scratch let another airline use it for free? No, the only solution is to take CRSs out of the competitive equation entirely by making the airlines sell out—at a fair price that recompenses them for their investment—and by making all airline schedules available to all travel agents. The Danforth-McCain bill should go a step further and ban the freebies for travel agents as well. That way, the major airlines will have to compete without making profits off of their competitors or by bribing travel agents. They'll have to do it by providing better service.

Access to the airways, like access to information, must become more competitive; expansion of the system alone won't eliminate the existing scams of scale, which will only become more efficient as the airlines get bigger. Gate leases should be short-term, no more than six months to a year, and they should be renewed by the airport authority—or canceled—based solely on the airline's performance at that airport. And as unpopular as slots are among even the major airlines, they shouldn't be abolished. Granted, the air traffic at the busiest airports probably could be kept to manageable levels by the FAA's Central Flow Control computer in Washington, the massive network that monitors traffic flow at airports throughout the nation. But that system holds traffic down by ordering delays—which would increase as airlines tried to pump new traffic into airports like LaGuardia and Washington National. A ground delay only inconveniences passengers, but in-flight delays can be deadly. The Avianca jet that crashed on Long Island was given *90 minutes* of in-flight delays because of the weather at JFK. Leaving aside the question of how the pilot should have reacted to his fuel shortage, why was he put in that situation to begin with? One

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can only wonder how long the delays will become as the skies become even more crowded.

Slots are a better means of managing traffic at busy airports. But making these slots permanent was a bad idea, and the buy-sell rule hasn't helped. Even auctioning the slots off—the Danforth-McCain solution—is no answer; the major airlines would just outbid smaller competitors. The only way to keep slots from being a barrier to entry is to take them back from the airlines, then assign them on a rotating basis, with each slot lease up for renewal once a year—again, based on the airline's performance.

The airports, meanwhile, need more freedom to expand to give potential competitors more access to gates. To escape their dependence on the carriers, airport operators are pushing for the collection of passenger fees to finance expansion. The Bush administration rightly endorsed this idea in its budget proposal. (The Airport Trust Fund is already supposed to pay for expansion projects but has become yet another White House bookkeeping smokescreen to hide the size of the federal deficit.) In return for these fees, airports should be held more accountable for bringing in competition. Airports are supposed to recruit a diverse group of airlines, but most aren't in the habit of building new gates and then finding tenants. The result is that most expansion projects involve one airline building 20 gates for itself, rather than airports building terminals that could house six or seven new competitors. The FAA still has to approve expansion plans and improvements, like equipment replacement and technological updates. It should use that leverage to promote competition, giving priority to the airports that have shown the most commitment to bringing in new carriers.

We don't have to go back to the old days of the Civil Aeronautics Board and regulated routes and fares to have a just system. With a few strategically placed controls to eliminate unfair barriers and a real commitment among government and industry officials to building and maintaining competition, the deregulated air system can provide passengers with choices and quality service. These changes would mean that all of the airlines—the big carriers as well as the small ones—would have to work harder to sell their seats and to hold onto their space at the airports. And as they became successful, airlines wouldn't be able to crush their competition with sheer bulk alone. But isn't that the way deregulation was supposed to work? □

THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY Journalism Award

for December 1989 is presented to:

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For thousands of defendants in the California system, due process is a sham. In this meticulous three-part series, Schrieburg and Ewell showed that the state's frequently untrained and unethical interpreters—often the only links between defendants and their judges and jurors—distort, omit, and invent testimony. Witnesses's accounts are mangled, and defendants can be convicted or released without having understood the questions put to them and without having conveyed their version of the truth.

Andrea Mitchell
NBC News

In a two part series for NBC's "Capitol Watch," Mitchell exposed for a national audience a lobbying scam that is familiar to Beltway insiders: the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. The committee's mass mailings grotesquely exaggerate threats to Social Security benefits, terrorizing elderly Americans into sending in money —more than $38 million last year. Mitchell showed that most of that money pays for mailings to solicit more funds and for fat salaries, luxurious offices, and lavish expense accounts for the committee's president and appointed board of directors.

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The award for stories published or aired in January will be announced in the April issue. Nominations for stories published or aired in February will close March 15. The winner will be announced in the May issue.

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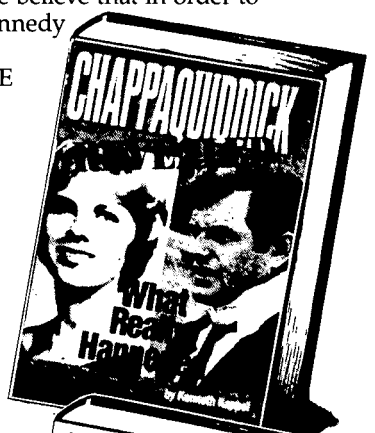

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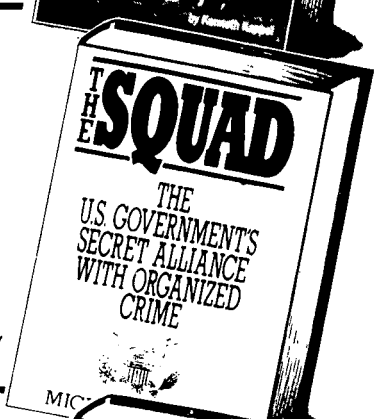

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Who are the Homeless?

Television anchormen say they're people you know. Op-ed columnists say they're war-heroes and playwrights. A few nights on Washington's streets say otherwise.

by Scott Shuger

For anyone living in a city, the dilemma unfolds dozens of times a day: There he is, between me and my immediate goal—The Man With The Styrofoam Cup, asking me a simple question: "Spare some change?" That question lights off others of my own that go unspoken: "What does this guy do with the money?" "How much does he make a day?" "Doesn't begging like this make him feel awful?" "Why doesn't it make him feel awful enough to stop and get a job?" "How did he get in this fix?" "Is he really in a fix, or is he taking me for a sucker?" "Why should I give to this guy rather than the other beggars on the block?" "Or do they think I can give to them all?"

"Spare some change?" comes up because I am in a limited way accessible to The Man With The Styrofoam Cup. My questions come up because he is in a radical way inaccessible to me. To most of us, the homeless are a visible mystery. Perhaps some of the most hardened among us would prefer them to be invisible. But the rest of us would prefer them to be less of a mystery. We want to help, yes, but we want our efforts to go where they will make a difference. For that to happen, we have to know what we're up against.

Scott Shuger is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

Hype for the holidays

Although there have been some harder-edged stories on the homeless, the main message the media delivers about them is that despite their predicament, they're just like us. In a news special, Tom Brokaw stated that the homeless are "people you know." Robert Hayes, director of the National Coalition for the Homeless, told *The New York Times* that when he is contacted by television news programs or congressional committees looking at homelessness, "they always want white, middle-class people to interview." A recent study that examined the national print and broadcast coverage given the homeless between November 1986 and February 1989 discovered that a quarter of the homeless people featured in stories were children. That was equal to the number of those identified as unemployed and three times the number identified as substance abusers. Only 4 percent of the stories attributed the plight of the homeless to their personal problems.

A recent publication of the Better Business Bu-

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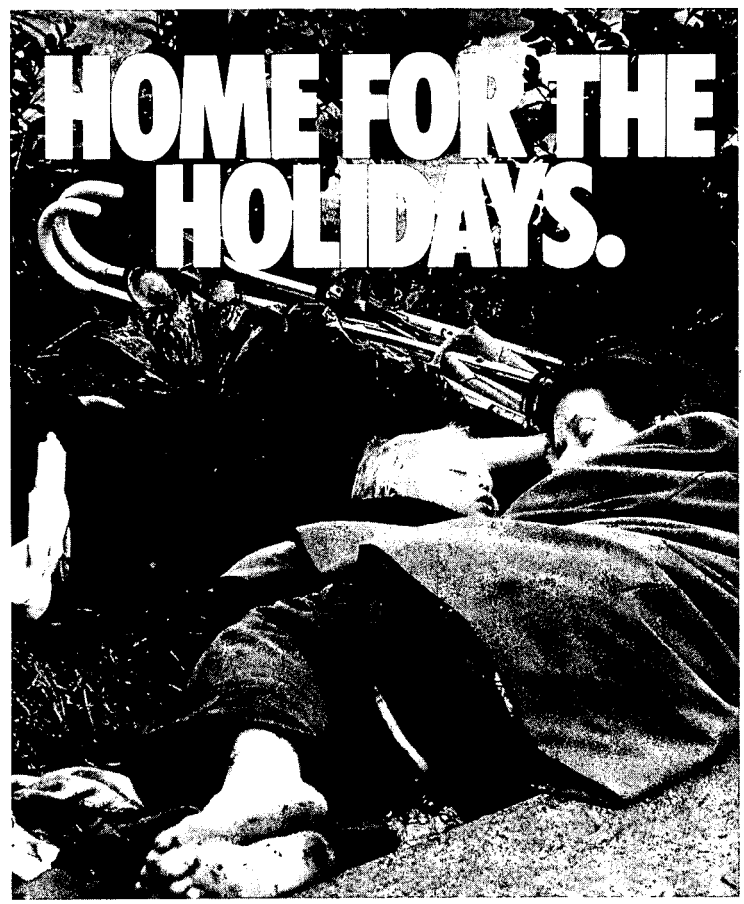
reau reported, "Many of those living in shelters or on the street are no different from those with a place to live . . . . Being on the street is often something out of their control." In a *New York Times* op-ed piece, Rep. Charles Schumer wrote that "the slightest misstep or misfortune—a temporary layoff, a large medical bill, a divorce—could send [a low-income] family onto the streets. Indeed that's exactly what's been happening." The concrete examples of the homeless Schumer cited are a working mother of eight whose eldest is an honor student, and a 63-year-old woman forced to retire from her job as a waitress because of arthritis. In another *Times* op-ed piece entitled "The Homeless: Victims of Prejudice," two Ivy League law students said that the homeless people they met during a summer of intern work included a Broadway playwright, a highly decorated World War II veteran, and an ex-professional basketball player. Not to mention "pregnant women who lost the race to stay one step ahead of the housing marshal, students trying to study in noisy shelters, and average families working diligently to save enough money for an apartment."

Jonathan Kozol, in his book on homeless families, *Rachel and Her Children*, features: a couple who, after their house burns down, lose their five children to foster homes and are reduced to panhandling; a 35-year-old woman, a college graduate who worked for many years before medical complications wiped out her savings, forced her to lose her home, ended her marriage, made her give up her kids, and left her sleeping on the beach; and a teacher, who when the heater in her building failed, was "in a matter of weeks . . . reduced from working woman and householder to a client of the welfare system." To the question "Why are they without homes?" Kozol responds, "Unreflective answers might retreat to explanations with which readers are familiar: 'family breakdown,' 'drugs,' 'culture of poverty,' 'teen pregnancies,' 'the underclass,' etc. While these are precipitating factors for some people, they are not the cause of homelessness. *The cause of homelessness is lack of housing*." (Italics in the original.)

Last December, the Salvation Army came out with a special TV commercial to boost its Christmas campaign for the homeless in New York City: *On the sidewalk in front of a wrought-iron fence, framed by a shopping bag on one side and a suitcase on the other, there's a mother and her child together in a sleeping bag, their white skins reflecting the street lights. As a man carrying a briefcase walks by, the child sits up; you can see her long blonde hair now. The mother kisses the girl and pulls her back down, hugging and patting her as they drift back to sleep.* "Home for the Holidays," the ad's caption says.

Honor students and playwrights, college graduates sleeping on the beach, mothers and daughters sleeping in the park—this is what I can read about or see on TV. But this is not what I see in Washington. Where in all this is the Man With The Styrofoam Cup?



UNLESS YOU HELP.

Please give what you can. Food, clothing, money or time.
Contact your nearest Salvation Army office.

THE SALVATION ARMY

Try finding homeless like these in your city.

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Although real homeless people are all around me every day, I've been vulnerable to the more idealized representations of the press because my approach to street people has been typical of the white middle class: Usually, I stare straight ahead and walk on by, my head full of those skeptical questions. Sometimes, something—an excess of change, a particularly good day, or just a weariness of skepticism—would make me stop and give some money. But no matter what, there was one thing I would never, ever, do: Talk to these people. Recently, however, I decided to break that nervous middle class habit. I resolved to talk to the homeless, to ask them some of the questions I had been keeping to myself in all the years of walking right by.

Nights of wine and poses

I first put my new approach into effect one night last winter. On the stretch of Connecticut Avenue just above Dupont Circle, it was cold and rainy, and the panhandlers were huddled in bunches near the entrances of the restaurants on the block. With most of the dinner crowd already gone, the best pickings were over for the day. That left only pedestrians like me.

Two men come up to me, styrofoam cups in hand: "Spare some change?" Both men are unsteady on their feet and hard to understand, with 100-proof breath. I make a donation and learn that the tall black man is named Mike and the short one is K.C. I ask them how long they've been on the streets, and they tell me six months. They've both had jobs in construction. Mike says he used to work as a bartender until he lost his job because of his drinking. When I ask where they stay at night, Mike says that the owner of an art gallery across the street lets them sleep in the lobby of the building. Mike says they get to bathe every two days at a shelter in Alexandria.

"What do you do with the money you get?" I ask. Mike gives me a thumb-to-the-lip bottle motion. Then he shrugs his shoulders in embarrassment. "I got to go to a program. An in-patient program so I cain't get out so I cain't mess up. I got to clean my act up."

Mike is very polite, calling me "sir" frequently and saying "excuse me" to every passerby. K.C. is a little closer to the edge of his personal envelope tonight. When a couple turns into the restaurant behind us, he snaps at them, "If you don't eat all your food, bring a doggy bag for us."

Some surveys say that an inordinate number of the District's homeless are veterans. So I ask, "Were either of you guys in the service?" "I was on the Ho Chi Minh Trail," replies Mike. "I was over there in Korea," says K.C. "Quit telling the man lies," scolds Mike. I ask K.C. where and when. "I'm trying to 'member man. I'm shell-blocked," he says. "I ain't no dummy. Now hold it. All I know is I was in the 101 Screaming Eagles Fort Campbell Kentucky. Basic Training Fort Dix. But where I was, I can't remember. I got shell-blocked. I've been shot up and all that shit, but I'm still alive."

Before I can pursue this, a completely drunk or stoned black woman comes over. She's in her late twenties, I'd guess. Her head is covered by a tight bandana and her eyes are only slits. Without saying anything, she greets Mike with a French kiss that lasts about ten seconds. Then she spends at least that long sticking her tongue in his ear. Even so, she's hanging on to Mike as much for navigation as for affection. "Sandra, this is him," Mike says, pointing towards me.

"I'm Chocolate," says Sandra. "That's Memphis and that's um, Black." Mike shrugs his shoulders in embarrassment again. Just then, a younger guy, more drugged than drunk, charges towards us. This guy is really revved up on something. He starts shouting at me from 25 feet away. He's in his late teens, early twenties, with a fighter's build and a bull neck. "That's my girlfren'—what you all doing to her?" He pushes the other three behind him and gets in my face. "Who do you see on this corner first? What's wrong? You gonna help us out?"

As I start to leave, Mike offers his hand. His handshake is solid. I bet the rest of him was too, several thousand drinks ago. "Give me your address," demands Sandra. "Can I go home with you tonight?" It was somewhere between pitiful and sexual. "I don't want no shelter. I want to go to your house. I want to sleep in a bed, a real righteous bed."

A block away I cross paths with two guys standing out of the rain under the overhang of a closed lunch stand. Both in their twenties, one white, the other black. It quickly becomes apparent that all they have in common is this dry spot of sidewalk. The white guy, who tells me his name is Wayne, asks me for some change, telling me he got laid off from a construction job. The black guy, without introducing himself, quickly tries to take over. "Hey, I'm in a situation too. I'm a starving artist, and nobody's giving me nothing. I don't have a job. But I'm a millionaire, I know that inside. That my art is worth money, OK? But I know I'm gonna make it. All I got to do is go to New York. I've been trying for four years to get back there. I just need enough money to go to New York. The only thing I need is like 150 bucks."

I ask him if he ever tries finding work in the want ads. "Everybody keeps saying that, man! The paper is to get you to buy it or look at it. They're still mak-

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ing money off you! Hey, see all these stores out here? Every one of them got a loan to get what they've got. Well, I need a loan. If I had a loan for about $10,000, I'd be a multimillionaire, man, because my art is fuckin' baaad. That's the only way I'm gonna make it—if I get a fuckin' loan."

Wayne hasn't said a word during this rap. But when the starving artist, now pretty agitated, nervously walks to the corner to search out better possibilities than me, Wayne rolls his eyes and says to me out of the corner of his mouth, "It don't take nobody no four years to get back to New York, I'm sorry." Wayne is not wildly drunk, but now that I'm standing close to him I can tell he's pretty numbed up. Wayne is one of the truly unsheltered homeless. In good weather he sleeps in the park just opposite the Q street Metro exit. In bad weather he sleeps under the portico of an attorney's office or in a nearby building that's under construction. He has shoulder-length light-blond hair coming down from under his ball cap, a moustache, and the beginnings of a beard. About four years ago, he came to this area from Texas with his family. Then his mother died and his father started a housepainting company in Virginia. Wayne used to work there. I ask him why he quit. This was, after all, the decision that finally put him on the street. I figure there had to be a pretty dramatic reason. All Wayne comes up with is this: "I just couldn't deal with it, too many Spanish workers—they can't speak English because most of them are illegal immigrants—and being the boss's son."

The artist comes back. "Can you give me a buck or 50 cents, man, so I can get on the subway?" he asks me. As I give him two quarters, I notice that he's wearing a Burberry scarf. After he leaves, Wayne says, "I don't like him. He's a con artist. I'm watching right now to see if he gets on the subway." He doesn't.

Wayne turns his attention back to me. "I used to be in trouble all the time until I got my head cleared. Put it this way," he chuckles, "I got a few tatoos from prison." Wayne says his conviction for knifing a guy in a Texas bar fight is a problem when he's looking for work. "That's why I go for jobs that are under the table."

Hope for some homeless

In my travels around Washington, I rarely see homeless women on the street. But there are places outdoors where they congregate. One such spot is a steep stretch of Belmont Street in the northwest quadrant of the city. Walking north on 14th Street and turning onto Belmont any evening at around 5:30, you will gradually become aware of a pilgrimage—first just a few shadows moving through the uneven light, but eventually a line of them making the daily trek up to the top of the hill. Most of the shadows are families, virtually all black, living in temporary housing for the homeless. There are very few men, either by themselves or attached to a family group. I fall in step with the shadow families, curious to see what could have this drawing power.

> "Give me your address," demands Sandra. "Can I go home with you tonight? I don't want no shelter. I want to go to your house. I want to sleep in a bed, a real, righteous bed."

At the top of the hill is the one-time Pitts Hotel, a ramshackle building now operated as a shelter for homeless families. Parked out front under the archway is a gleaming yellow Rolls Royce, District license plate 347. A man standing next to it tells me that it belongs to the building's owner, Cornelius Pitts. [For more on Pitts, see "How the Homeless Bought a Rolls for Cornelius Pitts," Marianne Szegedy-Maszak, July/August 1987.] The people file by it without taking much notice. The building has room for only 50 or so families, but every day the District's Department of Human Services deposits four additional busloads of shelter residents—mostly families—at the foot of the hill so that they can get a cooked meal.

Watching the women come and go on Belmont, you can't avoid the feeling that they are fighting some powerful obstacles in addition to the lack of a permanent place to live. Many seem tired and cranky, snapping at their children and cuffing them for transgressions that are hard to see in this light. "I'm not here because I'm all drugged up," says a plump woman with four kids in tow, hurrying down the hill to make the last bus. "I work as a nurse's assistant at

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D.C. General, and the truth is"—her voice lowers—"I had to leave where I was living because my friend was beating on me."

Despite these dark overtones, the longer I watch and listen, the more I become aware of the many hopeful signs on Belmont Street. As a group, these women seem fairly straight. Straight enough for Tom Brokaw. They stand in stark contrast to street hustlers like K.C. or the artist. Although the meals and the pick-up buses run on such a tight schedule that most of the women are in too much of a hurry to talk to me, those who do tell me that they are working, leaving their kids with babysitters during the day. A gregarious teenage mother of an 11-month-old tells me her biggest complaint: these daily crosstown voyages for food have left her baby with a persistent cold. A soft-spoken woman with three kids tells me that she has just gotten herself on a list downtown for housing placement; she hopes that in a few more weeks the city will be able to locate a place for her. Most of the women are dressed neatly, and some of the kids are in adorable get-ups: Bows in hair and party shoes for the girls, superhero jackets and team ballcaps for the boys. Obviously, many of these people are using their meager means for the right things; given more sustenance, most of them would only do more of the same. Yes, for the Belmont families, it seems that housing *would* be a big part of the answer.

Heartbreak hotel

At Mt. Carmel House, a homeless women's shelter in Washington's Chinatown, you can meet the people the Belmont Street women are trying not to become. Ann, for instance—a sad-eyed 41-year-old black woman who has come to this women's shelter straight from a stint at the detox unit at D.C. General. Ann discovered she couldn't handle alcohol after many years of what she calls "trial and error." Before booze derailed her life, she was a data clerk at the Veterans' Administration. But now she's lost her job, and her 18-year-old daughter lives with Ann's mother.

Or there's Marsha, a black woman in her twenties whose five years on cocaine and one year of living on the streets have somehow left her eyeballs and her teeth the same yellow color. This time last year, she was pawning anything she could get her hands on and working as a prostitute to raise drug money. A high-school dropout who was sexually abused by her father, Marsha has a daughter by a man she used to live with; she no longer has any contact with him and the authorities have taken the child away. Last November, Marsha got shot in the head by "some crackhead going around in the streets shooting for the hell of it. I should have gone to the doctor right away," she says. "But I wouldn't go to the doctor until I'd done all my cocaine first."

Celeste Valente, who's been a social worker at Mt. Carmel House for eight years, says that the shelter's 40-odd resident population now includes more younger women than it used to. There's been a decrease in the mentally ill clientele (now 30 percent of the population, down from 80 percent a few years ago) and an increase in drug addicts (almost all those in the shelter who are not mentally ill are substance abusers). Valente guesses that "more than 80 percent of the women who come here have been raped or were the victims of incest."

Another woman living at Mt. Carmel is Virginia, who's spent the last year in shelters—four in all. She's white, in her forties, with "done" hair, pink lipstick, and rouged cheeks. Her handbag says "Maui" on it. She could easily pass for a suburbanite down here doing volunteer work. In fact, she now volunteers a couple of nights a week at a nearby dinner program. "When I was working," Virginia remembers, "I gave about $1,500 of my United Way funds to the House of Ruth [another women's shelter in Washington]. And when I became homeless, that's the first place I went." Virginia's father was career Army. She was born in Austria. She has a literature degree from Georgetown. "I had the life," she says.

Here it seems I've come across a person worthy of Jonathan Kozol, the Salvation Army, and all the other "it could happen to anyone" theorists. But there's a difference they might not like. Virginia's an alcoholic. And she spent a long time in what she describes as a "sick" relationship with a sexually abusive man. After she was laid off from her job managing an engineering office, she stayed in her apartment, watched TV, and drank for eight months. "I drank copious amounts of beer," she tells me, "three six-packs to a case a day."

Karmic crossed wires

During the eighties, Lafayette Park, just across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, became a campground for homeless squatters. Indeed, some people have lived there for most of the decade, conducting what they call a "peace vigil." The vigil is often on the itinerary of school classes visiting from out of town. The peace squatters have positioned themselves along the south edge of the park, where their placards about Hiroshima and nuclear freeze face the president's front door. Sixties-like, they give themselves new names like "Sunrise." One vigiler I talk to, who's lived here for three years, used to work as an art restorer before joining the scene he de-

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scribes as a "karmic crossfire." He doesn't want to live anywhere else. He supports himself by performing three nights a week in a "folk rock" band. The rest of the time he's out in the park, sometimes sleeping in his jury-rigged plastic shelter, sometimes cooking up a stew, or greeting pedestrians with lines like, "Peace, brother. Thanks for smiling"—whether the guy is smiling or not.

But some of the homeless in Lafayette Park are conducting more private vigils. Take the man on the park bench, hands on knees, open bottle of beer at his feet, just staring intensely at the White House. With the green of his poncho and the way his eyes are bulging, he looks like a frog on a lily pad. "I'm here to talk to George," he tells me. When he sees my fatigue pants, he goes to Red Alert, "Are you Marine Corps, FBI, Secret Service? Are you wearing a tape recorder?" I reassure him. He's so close to jumping out of his skin that I worry about what would happen if he were to notice the two men in uniform on the White House roof. "Yeah, George is a good man," the guy on the bench says, continuing to stare straight ahead. "I don't have nothing against him. He's a naval aviator and all that. When he went out to San Francisco after that earthquake, I talked to him." I asked the man if he flew out there to do that. "Nope," he says, never taking his eyes off his quarry, "talked to him by Telstar."

The Telstar man has plenty of company in Washington. Near my office for instance, there is the tall, helmeted man who keeps a guardpost at the corner of Q and Connecticut. When you get close to him, you can see that he's wearing a flannel West German army uniform. He's sort of handsome and he has that straight-from-the-diaphragm voice and ramrod posture so valued in drill instructors. His long reddish brown hair runs in a thin, tight braid down his back. Tucked in his helmet and pointing straight up are three toothbrushes, looking like periscopes.

When I ask him his name, he replies, "General. U.S. General. None of that Noriega thing for me." I notice that he's wearing a Top Gun squadron patch; he tells me where he got it: "The Surgeon General distributed it to the field artillery and ballistics command and the dominions of trade. Top Gun. Miramar California. I took the training out there about eight weeks ago. It was about the failure to inform people at the White House. And to maintain gun standards, computer standards, or surgical standards."

When I ask General what he's doing at this corner, he tells me, "This is the field marshal air combat warning post here for the businesses and the banks. This post is the way that the military has become involved about the levering of the topmost business developments." What's he watching out for? The answer comes back instantly: "The Turks." As to how long he'll be in this assignment, General guesses about 40 years. "It should improve sometime in the nineties as far as the Motorola business is concerned. Eventually I will tend towards Walkman business. How the General maintains his districting or vector businesses is highly dependent upon Walkman skills."

General does not know he's homeless. When I ask him where he goes at night and in bad weather, he tells me that he confers with the president. He readily distinguishes himself from panhandlers, whom he dismisses as "people who have no ownership interests or no mortgage or paper interests." However, in a way, he does have his own version of "Spare some change?" As I'm leaving, he says to me, "You should bring me a banknote so that the interests you represent can be represented here."

The grate society

Under an overpass in Foggy Bottom just east of the Potomac and just north of the exclusive Watergate apartment complex are some steam grates that have long served as a thermal oasis for the homeless. The night I walk by is chilly, so the grates are pretty full. When I approach, several of the men there ask me for change. The hot air rushing out of this hole in the ground produces a loud hum you have to shout over. The steam itself provides a two-part sensation: first your face gets hit by a pleasant rush of warmth, then your nose gets hit by the stench of stale booze. Booze that's soaked through clothes, that's soaked through skin, that's soaked through lives.

There are nine or ten men at the grate this night. It's an interracial group. Some are huddled at the edges, some just racked out across it. The two men who asked me for money talk to me a lot, but some of the others never even look in my direction.

One man tells me he's been out here for two years, another says eight. The liveliest talker is a young black guy named Tony. In his mid-twenties, he's handsome and, in an alcoholic sort of way, articulate. Tony points to a woman coming our way. "Here comes my girlfriend. That's why I'm out here, because of her." A black woman weaves towards us. She's really drunk. She plops down sullenly at the edge of the grate, no use for anybody. "I met her in July when I came out the Navy," Tony says, unaccountably thrilled to see her.

Tony says he's not really homeless because he can stay with his aunt at 14th and Euclid. But it's real late and he's still out here drinking.

Tony says he was in the Navy for eight years. "Aviation. Backseater in F-14s. I was a second lieu-

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tenant. I worked in the Indian Ocean on the *Nimitz*. Just got out in July. I'm going back. I'm in the reserves." There's a pause. "I was supposed to been back—I'm not going to lie to you. I'm AWOL. When I came out of high school and went to the Navy, I started out as an NCO—a noncommissioned officer. I was an NCO all the way. I went to school in Annapolis. When I go back, they may drop me down to like E-4. After I get out of the brig. I see Navy cars go by here every day. They're MPs, man, I know they lookin' for me.

"I want to re-up for maybe four more years. And then come back and get me a job at one of these airports as an aviator or air traffic controller. But it's gonna be a while for me now because last Saturday night, some girl stabbed me in my chest. And all I got is one lung now." As he's telling me this, Tony's unbuttoning his shirt. He shows me a Band-Aid just under his clavicle. It's not a very elaborate dressing, and I don't see any signs of actual injury. "I just got out of the hospital. And today two guys tried to jump on me." Tony shows me his punching hand. The knuckles on it are very swollen. "So it's gonna be a while—maybe another two months—until I go back."

Tony says the Navy sent him here on shore leave to bury his grandmother. "That's when I met Karen," he tells me, nodding toward the poor woman who just joined us. "Took a liking to her. And she turned my head around." He says Karen used to drive trucks in the Army, that she was in Vietnam. He says she's 38. She looks 58. Tony reaches between his knees into the red plastic milk crate he's sitting on and pulls out a white plastic flask. Gin, he tells me. A pint a day. Pointing at the others, he explains, "They drink that hard stuff."

Tony's story was fascinating, but it wasn't true. You can't start out in the service as an NCO, and "second lieutenant" is not a rank in the Navy.

The old man at my feet, whom Tony introduces as Jimmy, "the granddaddy of the grates," mumbles at me. In the slurred words of a lifelong drunk he tells me that he's worked as a tow-truck driver at an Amoco station for 18 years. But, he says, "See those," pointing at some of Georgetown's poshest apartments, "I don't make enough money to rent no apartment for $250 a month. So I stay here." Jimmy's incredibly dirty. He never looks up at me. His attention is riveted on a little pack of picture cards he keeps riffling through. They're not baseball cards, although they're that size. Because they're predominantly pink, I assume they're pornographic. When Jimmy hands me one, I see they're not. They're pictures of food. The card in my hand is "Shrimp with Greens."

The closest thing to an American monument to homelessness is the shelter run by the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV) in the former Federal City College building at the intersection of 2nd and D in downtown Washington. This is the building that the federal government agreed to lease to homeless advocate Mitch Snyder in 1984 after Snyder led a 51-day fast. Housing 1,400 homeless—1,265 men and 135 women—it's the largest shelter in the country, perhaps in the world. CCNV's literature calls it "a national model."

Since its inception, the CCNV shelter has received over $13 million in combined federal and D.C. appropriations, and another $500,000 in corporate donations. I wanted to get an idea of what that money is buying. To do that, I decided to take my idea of talking to the homeless one step further by going to the shelter and asking for help.

Shelter skelter

I showed up at CCNV late on a Saturday afternoon in January, dressed in my worst clothes and having not washed or shaved for days. In front of the building, Saturday night is already well underway. Thirty or so men are standing on the porch and along the sidewalk, talking loudly and taking regular pulls from the brown paper bags they all seem to have. One of the louder guys is a gapped-toothed man in a purple parka. He's shouting out at anybody walking by and going through a loud review of the lunch he had at some soup kitchen: "Uhhhh-uhhhh, barbecue chicken! I'm telling you, they got *down*. . . ."

When they're not drinking and cursing, the men spend a lot of time spitting. The sidewalk is phlegm-spotted. It's hard to find a dry spot on the steps to sit on. Almost as soon as I do, I attract the attention of a disastrously drunk man who until then had been working full-time trying to keep from impacting the sidewalk. He's lurching about furiously, like a man on the deck of a storm-blown ship. He finally makes it over next to me. Even sitting down, he's weaving. He mumbles something to me I can't make out. The second time, I catch it: "Do you have five cents?" When I say I don't, he repeats the question. Then he mumbles something else, "What's in the bag?" For authenticity, I have a paper bag with me. The drunk grabs my arm and tries to pull me towards him. "What's in the bag?" "Nothing for you," I tell him, moving away. This catches Purple Parka's attention. From his perch, he looks down at me and barks, "Talk to the man like that and I'll bust yo' ass on the sidewalk."

When a woman comes to the front of the building with some stuff to donate, Purple Parka comes down and swarms all over her, putting his arm around her

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and trying to take her through a door where she doesn't want to go. "Be sociable," another man tells him. "You not on the staff." Parka snaps back, "I ain't yo' nigger." When a girl with a pretty hairstyle walks by, he shouts at her, "I want your hair!" She replies, "You gonna buy me some more?"

I move down to the wooden benches near one corner of the building. From here, I can see something that I couldn't before. Behind a van across the street, two guys are fighting. They must be pretty drunk; the pace doesn't let up a bit even when one guy slams the other's head into the van.

There's a constant stream of men coming in and out of the building. A beer can in a paper sack is practically part of the uniform. A few weeks before tonight, *Newsweek* ran a picture of the area where I'm sitting now. In the shot, the CCNV building and grounds looked spic-and-span. The three guys now on the bench to my right, sharing a joint, weren't there. And neither were the two women and one guy on the sidewalk right in front of me, passing a reefer between them. A young black guy dressed in the immaculate fashion of followers of Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan—black suit, bow tie, highly polished shoes—comes over to the trio. I expect him to tell them to put the joint out. But instead he takes off his Walkman and lends it to one of the women. She closes her eyes and sways to the music, continuing to take her tokes. A guy yells down to the group from the balcony, "You know she be horny when she smokes that shit!"

So far, out of the hundred or so people I've seen at CCNV, I'm the only white. That's why I notice when three white guys come out of the building. They're walking down the ramp when a tall man with one of those Eraserhead hairdos that's high and flat on top and shaved bald all around the sides suddenly comes up in their faces and edges them towards the wall. He says something to them and then they sheepishly continue on their way. Eraserhead has now joined Purple Parka out front as one of CCNV's unofficial greeters. He's got a pocket square tucked into his sports jacket, and is wearing a fancy-looking watch and four rings.

I go inside to find out what prospects there are for getting put up for the night. I'm told that the shelter is full until Tuesday, but that a van will eventually come to take me to one of the city's emergency shelters. I decide to wait in the lobby. Over the next couple of hours there I see a lot.

Residents continue to stream in and out of the building. (There is no sign-in or sign-out. The building is open most of the time. Between midnight and 4 a.m. the front door is opened for five minutes every half hour.) About a third of the people I see are carrying Walkman sets. At least half are carrying beer or liquor. The stuff's usually in a paper bag, but several people, Eraserhead among them, are carrying beer in plastic cups. Later, a CCNV spokesman named Lawrence Lyles tells me that CCNV policy is that "we allow people to have beer and hard stuff, but not illegal drugs. As long as they maintain themselves. This is the residents' house. If you were home, you'd drink a little beer, wouldn't you?" But more than a few of the residents are not maintaining themselves. Drunks—weaving, falling-down drunks—are a common sight in the lobby. Some of them get up the steps only because they are carried up. Only once does a staff member ask anybody what he's carrying in. And when the resident laughs off the question, the staff member doesn't pursue it. What I see supports what an experienced city social worker tells me later: "There are drugs in CCNV. The place is out of control."

> What I see at Mitch Snyder's shelter supports what an experienced city social worker tells me later: "There are drugs in [there]. The place is out of control."

Conversation here tends to be animated, often hostile. "If all you needed to live was a teaspoon of water," one man snaps at another, "I wouldn't give it to you." Another man explains in a loud voice why he wants a stiletto. "Because if I miss you one way, I'll cut you coming back." "Look," says one laughing guy to his friend, pointing to a bearded, wasted white man whose eyes are set on infinite, "Charlie Manson is on parole."

A handsome man with longish gray-black hair comes down to get his mail. He's carrying two books, the first I've seen here. He's neatly dressed in a completely coordinated Army camouflage uniform. In this scene, he looks as solid as a rock. He's walk-

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ing towards me as he finishes his letter. "They say they will give me money if I go to a psychiatrist," he tells me, his face lit up now by a scary smile. "But I will stay here instead!"

Even in this chaos, there are some touches fit for a public service announcement. An older black man asks a feeble-looking white man about how he's mending since he got hit by a car. He listens patiently as the man shows him his injuries and explains what medical appointments he has set up in the days ahead. A lady gives a man in a wheelchair a spin he clearly enjoys.

At about 8 p.m., one of the staff members very politely informs the few of us who've been waiting for transportation that there will be no van run tonight. He quickly goes on to tell us that there's room at one of the city's newest emergency shelters. And it's within walking distance, over at the Department of Employment Services just around the corner.

On my way there, I fall in with two other guys, Tom and James, headed for the same place. They are both refreshingly clean-cut and substance-free. We all shake hands and quickly hit it off. The DES shelter is actually in the employees' parking garage underneath the building. It's well heated, and the nice lady volunteer who checks us in issues us like-new Army cots and a tuna sandwich apiece. There are about 50 people already on cots when we arrive—the place is full. The three of us help each other set up our cots. Tom takes a shower and brings some cups and water back from the bathroom to make up some Kool-Aid he's brought with him. He shares it with James and me and gives us each a cookie, too. The shelter atmosphere is pretty much like that of a barracks; there's plenty of "smokin' and jokin'" but the drunks are mostly down for the count. The roving armed guard probably helps.

The three of us talk among ourselves. Tom's a white guy with a bushy moustache. He just got out of jail—during a routine traffic stop the day before, he got arrested on an old warrant for driving without a license. He made bail, but he's from Virginia, and without a license or car (it got impounded), and low on money, he has no way to get back. And he has no place to stay here. His court date is next month, and he figures he will get some jail because, as he puts it, "this isn't the first time."

James is black and works in the kitchen at the Marriott in Crystal City. He's wearing an Army jacket, from his days as a parachute rigger in the Airborne. This is his first day on the streets. He had been living with his girlfriend, but they had a fight. James works on the side as a party DJ. At one of these parties, a girl gave him her phone number to give to a friend of his, but James's girlfriend discovered it in his jacket and went nuts, throwing James out of the house and all of his stuff down the stairs. I ask James if there isn't a family member he can stay with until this boils over. "I tried staying with my mother," he answers, "but she had too many restrictions—she won't give me a key, she won't let me in past 11 at night, and there's no TV downstairs. I'm a party animal."

Lying back on my cot, I spend a long time staring at the garage ceiling, trying to figure out James's logic. Why would somebody clean and employed choose this—and tomorrow night maybe something much worse—over coming in at 11 to a house with only one TV? Would "people you know" do that?

Conspicuous dysfunction

The Depression taught most Americans that there are plenty of ways to become poor that aren't one's fault. By now this is a lesson well learned. Perhaps too well-learned. Americans tend to believe that homelessness is exclusively a social problem, a system failure. This idea goes hand-in-hand with the traditional liberal notion that the solution to the problem is simply the provision of housing and jobs. While there is something to this, it's not *the* solution—as I found out for myself there's too much else going on with the homeless.

Allowing for the possibility of some overlap, here's how I would roughly classify the homeless people I met: At least three-quarters were (current or recovering) substance abusers, three-quarters were unattached men, and about a third seemed to some degree mentally ill. But there is another important factor I observed in about half of the homeless people I talked to—one that takes a little explaining. I call it the "X-factor" because I'm not having much luck figuring it out.*

Ronald Reagan once came in for a lot of well-deserved criticism for saying that anybody who is homeless is so only because he chooses to be. That's a ridiculous notion. Sleeping in the park in the winter, being chronically sick and disoriented—nobody chooses *that*. But just the same, people like the New York artist, Wayne from Texas, and James are carrying something around in their heads that's separating them from opportunities and propelling them towards ruin. The artist has his incoherent put-down of the

*It's interesting to compare my description of the homeless population based on my own experience with what you can find in print elsewhere. Most respected policy studies and surveys are now saying that about a third of the homeless are mentally ill, a third are substance abusers, and a third are "other." That is, they find less substance abuse than I did, about the same amount of mental illness, and tend to leave the rest of the population an undifferentiated mystery while I think some of that remainder is in the grip of X-factor thinking.

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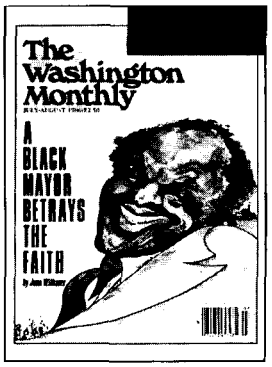

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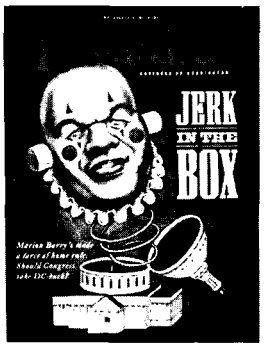

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classifieds, Wayne has his equally confused contempt for the work at his father's business, and James has his odd standards about acceptable living conditions. Here are some other examples of the X-factor I came across in talking to the homeless:

➤One of the beggars I frequently see is a 24-year-old black guy who goes by the street name "Quickness." He can usually be found around Dupont Circle either zoned out or trying to be. He tells me that he originally came to Washington to sell PCP, but he got caught and spent three years in jail. He's been on the streets for the seven months since he got out. When I ask him what he wants out of life, he tells me "money." His parents are back in Florida, and they know he's up here, but he won't go back to them and he won't even tell them he's homeless. Quickness prefers staying in the streets to that.

➤A fiftyish man whom I often see late at night begging near my office, an articulate man who appears sane and drug- and alcohol-free, tells me that he served in submarines in the Navy and then worked at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He says that he lost his job at the NRC because of differences with his bosses. Later, he landed a job stuffing envelopes for a political organization, but he quit because he didn't agree with the material he was mailing and went back to the streets, where he makes about $2 an hour (it turns out that's the typical figure for a Washington beggar).

➤A young woman I met who splits her begging between Dupont Circle and Georgetown tells me that she recently failed the Civil Service exam. I ask her if she has tried to get into a job training program. "I feel that I don't have the time for that. I just want something right now. Something I can just walk into and get right then and there."

All of these people fail the Bill Shade test. Bill is the only single male homeless person I met who I am convinced is actively trying every day to become unhomeless. Bill was working in construction when he got burned out of his apartment. Most of what Bill collects from begging he turns over to the woman who takes care of his daughter. Once I was talking to Bill when I noticed the Help Wanted sign behind his head. He read my mind: "I already went in there, but they want a girl to work behind the counter." So instead he sweeps the sidewalk in front of the shop. He works odd jobs whenever he can. He cleans up around the bank where he sleeps. He puts quarters in expired parking meters to save people he doesn't know from paying the $15 ticket. He's hoping to get the funds together to move back to Baltimore with his daughter. If reading this story makes you feel like helping a single homeless person directly, call me or write me about Bill Shade.

I'm finding it hard to articulate the troublesome mental baggage that hampers the New York artist or Quickness say, but not Bill Shade. It's not, contra the Reagan camp, mere laziness—these people work much harder every day than most just to keep from freezing to death. It's something more like a twisted sense of pride—a sense of personal specialness tweaked so ridiculously high that anything—even sleeping outside and begging for food—is viewed as better than forms of compromise that you and I would readily accept, like fitting in at work, getting a job out of the newspaper, or coming home at 11. For all I can tell, some of this odd thinking is the extreme rationalization so common in alcoholics and substance abusers, and some is a sign of a treatable organic thought disorder, like mild schizophrenia. But I'm also convinced that some of the homeless I met who evinced the X-factor were neither mentally ill nor addicts. What do we make of them?

> The Depression taught most Americans that there are plenty of ways to become poor that aren't a person's fault. By now this is a lesson well-learned. Perhaps too well-learned.

If you've raised children in the seventies and eighties, then you know how the emphasis on rampant instant gratification and conspicuous consumption of such television fare as "Dallas," "Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous," and "L.A. Law" can distort your children's desires and expectations. Sometimes being "tough"—emphasizing setting goals and working hard to achieve them, etc.—brings kids around on this. But many parents have experienced the bewilderment that comes when that doesn't work. How do we reach Johnny? How do we bring him down to earth so that he can make a good life for himself? Parents can use up a decade or more wrestling with

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such questions, often without arriving at an answer. Well, maybe the bewilderment I feel in the face of the foregoing examples is similar, with a similar cause. But about two or three times more extreme. It seems that some of the homeless have just soaked up way too much of our culture's obsession with "too much, too soon."

There can be all the low-cost housing in the world, and an untreated paranoid won't set foot in it, and an untreated schizophrenic might burn it down. (Dr. E. Fuller Torrey, a psychiatrist who is an expert on the homeless mentally ill, told me that he has encountered both outcomes.) And a drug addict will spend the rent money on crack. So homelessness is in large measure a mental health problem and a drug problem that defies the conventional liberal answers of housing and jobs. But notice this about the X-factor homeless: They aren't likely to be people for whom jobs and housing alone would be the answer, either. Once a man decides to eat only caviar, he will turn down bread as fervently as an ordinary man turns down poison. If low cost housing were made available to the New York artist (and for all I know, it already has been), but there was no $10,000 loan, how would he pay the rent? If he were offered a nonglamorous job to make the rent, would he take it?

There certainly seem to be homeless people who are nearly like you and me, save for some intervening bad breaks. Many of the women on Belmont Street appear to fit that bill, as does Bill Shade. So for people like these, fixing the bad break—making jobs and housing available—*is* what's called for. But media depictions to the contrary, there are more homeless people—the untreated mentally ill, the addicted, and those with the X-factor—*who are not like us*. As a result, if they are ever to realize secure and steady lives, they will require different kinds of help.

Traditional liberals don't want to admit such differences—and that's wrong—because they want us to help all the homeless—that's right. Neoconservatives admit the differences (right) because they don't want to help them all (wrong). The correct position is to admit the differences among the homeless while strenuously working to help them all. If conservatives need to care more, liberals need to *see* more. It's a cruel joke to pretend that an untreated mentally ill person is better off in the streets than he would be if he were compelled somehow to take medication, or to pretend that Quickness would hold down a job with the same tenacity as Bill Shade. To make real progress in the fight against homelessness, we must first be honest about who the homeless are. □

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The Worst City Government

If great leaders—Gandhi, Martin Luther King—are judged by the impact of their example, then Marion Barry is headed for the history books. The D.C. government is being investigated for drug use at all levels. According to *The Washington Times*, law enforcement officials have "confirmed that dozens of city workers in virtually every one of the city's 14 major agencies are buying and selling drugs."

On January 25th an ambulance crew was called to aid an overdose victim at the (aptly named) Central Intake Facility of the District's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Administration. The victim, who lay prone on the lobby floor, was not one of the addicts who come to the facility for treatment and counseling. He was a supervisor and counselor. The paramedics administered Narcon, which is used to reverse drug-induced shock. After he regained consciousness, the man refused a trip to the hospital.

An ADASA spokeswoman confirmed that a city employee had overdosed on Thursday the 25th. By Friday, however, the overdose had become a "medical crisis," with no mention of drug use. Sources within the department told the *Times* that they have seen "a few of the people in charge here snorting cocaine at their desks." The overdose occurred just two days after the announcement of a major in-house investigation of drug use at the Department of Human Services, ADASA's parent agency.

It may be that, since his arrest, Mayor Barry is trying to present a new and improved example for his workers. When he decided to seek help, he steered clear of the Central Intake Facility—in fact, of any city service. He went to Florida.

—Bill Yelverton

Less than two years after lackluster fans convinced a surly owner to pack up the Cardinals and head for Phoenix, St. Louis is ardently courting the National Football League for a new team. This time, it's sweetened its proposal with the promise of a domed stadium. The city is planning to pay 25 percent of the $225 million tab for the building project, with the state and county picking up the rest.

Unfortunately, St. Louis doesn't stand much of a chance of attracting a new team. During the Superbowl, a group of would-be owners lobbied NFL officials in New Orleans. The best guarantee they could get? A vague commitment that the league would expand by a couple of teams sometime in the mid-nineties. Good news— except that Baltimore, Memphis, Sacramento, Oakland, Charlotte, Birmingham, Jacksonville, San Antonio, and other cities are lined up and waiting for a franchise.

It's a little unclear what will happen if the dome isn't enough to overcome St. Louis's poor track record and win it the deal. The baseball Cardinals are planning to stay in Busch Stadium. And there are only so many political conventions and Pan Am games to go around. Even if the city gets a team, it would need the stadium only eight or nine days a year.

If St. Louis were desperate to find ways to spend money, pumping millions into building a shiny vacant warehouse in the shadow of the Arch would make a lot of sense. But the city has more pressing problems. St. Louis boasts dismal public schools and a 10,000-member waiting list for public housing. The price of the dome is just less than the city's entire education budget—and it's more than ten times the combined federal and city investment in St. Louis housing.

St. Louis could learn something from St. Petersburg. This month, the Florida city opens its newly built baseball dome to . . . no one. The city has spent $110 million to construct a vacant building. City officials admit they can schedule only a few trade shows and tractor pulls. That means higher taxes, a larger debt, and a drain on city services.

—Daniel Mirvish

The *Monthly* depends on its readers to keep track of the breakdown of big city government. Please send your nominations to:

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On Her Majesty's Civil Service

Snobs at the top, no patronage, and other perils.

by John Peet

Few countries outside Britain have a collective noun for their civil service. Whitehall itself is a misnomer—among main departments, only the Treasury, the Foreign Office, the Cabinet Office and the Health Department actually face the London street that connects Trafalgar and Parliament Squares. But the street's name instantly conjures up an image: of a man (few top British officials are women) in a pinstriped suit complete with bowler hat and sandwiches to munch for lunch in St. James's Park. Even the television series "Yes, Minister" has not changed this image. Instead, it has confirmed the popular view that such men spend their lives, like reverse Micawbers, gloomily waiting for something to turn down.

Peter Hennessy is fascinated by the British civil service in the manner of the perpetual outsider looking in. His career as a journalist and academic has been little more than a preparation for this book.* It is no surprise that one of his conclusions is that Whitehall should admit well-qualified and energetic outsiders—the subtext suggests the author himself—who have spent their early lives elsewhere. (Were I, a former Treasury official, to write such a book, I would conclude that Whitehall should open up to those who have left it.) Hennessy's obsession has produced a book that, in the American style, is at least 250 pages too long. It is a bit ponderous, and the author is overly fond of the phrase "jumping the gun." But it deserves to be the definitive book for anyone who wants to understand British government.

Wallowing in its pages produces some splendid tidbits. Three of the last four prime ministers (Wilson, Heath, and Callaghan) began their careers in civil service. It is hard to imagine an American president having done the same. Of the many characterizations of civil servants that are quoted, the best is Hugh Dalton's "congenital snag-hunters." And of the anecdotes, the one I liked most concerned the formidable John Anderson when he was the Home Office's permanent secretary (top official) in the 1930s. A lowly official sent a paper under his signature—"HMT"—to Anderson's boss, the secretary of state. His superiors, through whom the paper passed, unanimously disputed HMT's recommendations. But the secretary of state wrote that he agreed with HMT. The next note on the file, signed by Anderson, read simply: "I have spoken with the S of S. He no longer agrees with HMT."

In addition to telling such delightful stories, this book raises some serious points about government. Though the British civil service's roots can be traced to Elizabeth I's adviser William Burghley, today it is essentially the product of one document, the 1854 Northcote-Trevelyan report, and one man, Sir Warren Fisher, permanent secretary to the Treasury from 1919 to 1939. Northcote-Trevelyan scrapped the system of patronage appointments and put in its place the idea of career civil servants selected by competitive exams—an idea deliciously sent up in Anthony Trollope's novel *The Three Clerks*. One incidental result of Northcote-Trevelyan is that in Britain, unlike America, the career civil service reaches right to the top, to just below cabinet minister rank. As for Fisher, it was he who ensured that the service was uniformly graded and paid—and answerable to the Treasury.

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* *Whitehall.* Peter Hennessy. *Free Press, $35.00.*

John Peet is the Washington correspondent for The Economist.

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It all sounds like progress, doesn't it? But it has led, Hennessy believes, to some serious problems. One is that British public administration is uniquely closed to outsiders. In France or America, by contrast, it is common for an academic, say, or a lawyer to serve a stint as a senior official in government. Hennessy cites approvingly the experience of World War II, when Whitehall successfully drafted in squads of outsiders to help run a siege economy. At a crucial meeting in March 1946, the head of the civil service, Sir Edward Bridges, opted to go back to career insiders even though the job of the civil service, like the role of government, had become manifestly bigger and more managerial.

Truckloads of snag-hunters

But it is the combination of Treasury control and Mrs. Thatcher that has done most recent damage to the Whitehall machine. When I joined the Treasury in 1975-76, the British economy was going through its worst patch since the war. Yet morale, stimulated by the interest that always attends crisis and by the presence of the pugnacious Denis Healey as chancellor of the exchequer, was high. The British Treasury is more powerful than its American counterpart, for it effectively includes the jobs of both the Office of Management and Budget and the Federal Reserve. We young officials certainly thought smugly that we were an elite fitted to govern. Parliament was at best an irrelevant rubber stamp for government legislation and at worst a nuisance to which, through our ministers, we were only nominally accountable (contrast that, too, with the power of the U.S. Congress).

Ten years later, when I resigned to join *The Economist,* old-timers were saying that morale was as low as it had ever been. Three things had happened. First, pay had fallen more dramatically behind outside levels. Second, since the arrival of Mrs. Thatcher in 1979, civil servants had been constantly denigrated for both their function and their abilities—often by the ministerial bosses who ought to have supported them. The two interrelate—lower pay can both contribute to and reflect lower status and morale.

The third change was that the long-held belief that all policy expertise was to be found inside Whitehall had been severely shaken—in part because those unsupportive ministers refused to accept it and in part because London was following Washington in the arrival of a miscellaneous bag of think tanks, pressure groups, and quasi-academics with considerable and growing influence.

Neither this change nor Mrs. Thatcher herself has been all bad. She has introduced more political advisers and brought in a few highly paid outsiders. And she has enthusiastically pressed for better management and delegation of authority away from the central Whitehall departments (though not as far as local authorities, which she has spent ten years emasculating). Ultimately, that will mean removing some of the Treasury's power over pay and conditions, maybe even weakening its tight grip on public spending. One industrialist quoted by Hennessy reckons that the Treasury has done more damage to Britain this century than Germany and Japan put together. You do not have to subscribe to this view to welcome hints of a diminution of its power.

Yet even after this change, there will still be an enormous contrast between the British and, say, the Japanese civil services. Indeed one can widen the two camps: on one side are the Anglo-Saxons, who have spent the past decade or so systematically undermining the status, morale, and pay of their public services, and on the other are the Japanese, French, and West Germans, who continue to hold public service in high regard—and are accordingly better at attracting able outsiders into it. In Paris and Tokyo, the brightest college graduates think naturally of a stint in public administration; in New York and London, they head straight for lawyers' offices, consultancies, and banks. The social and economic consequences are obvious.

Of course that is too simple. Government (and the economy) in both Washington and London suffers from lots of other problems. The British, for instance, draw virtually all ministers from the tiny pool of the 650-strong House of Commons, hardly a recipe for recruiting only the most talented. America suffers enormously from the total clear-out at the top that accompanies changes in administration—newcomers can spend two years getting their knowledge up to the point their predecessors had already reached. Both countries make matters worse by switching officials (and, in Britain, ministers) to new jobs every couple of years. And both could benefit from more determined efforts to bring in able outsiders at all levels (not just the senior level, as in Washington).

But the contrast between America and Japan, in particular, is significant. One Japan expert, David Hale of Kemper Financial Services in Chicago, reckons it could partly explain the difference in relative performance. Ten years after the deregulation and anti-Washington mood arrived in America, perhaps more people will start to realize that in a complex modern society a decently paid, high-morale public service that is determinedly open to outside entry can be as important an ingredient of economic and social success as many truckloads of business-school entrepreneurs and lawyers. □

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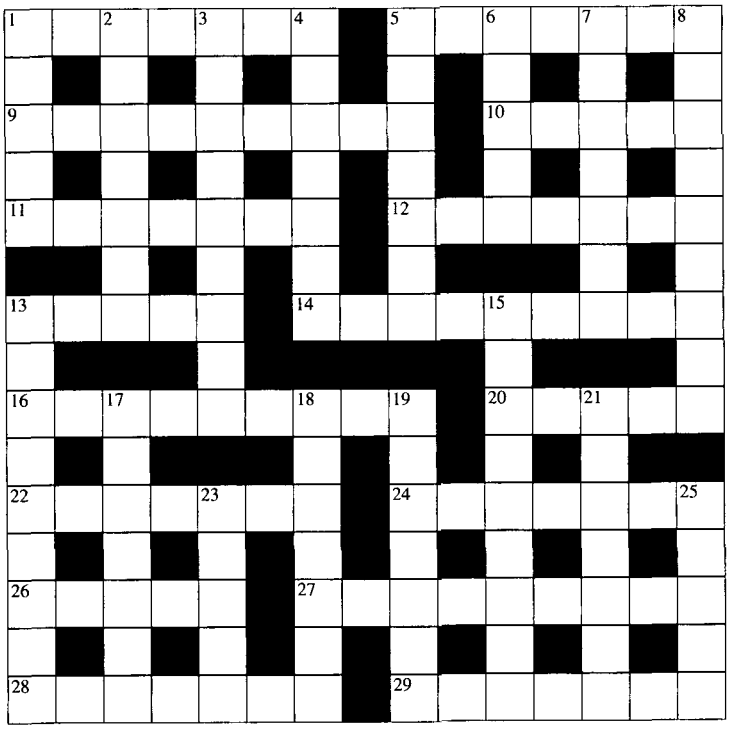
POLITICAL PUZZLE

by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



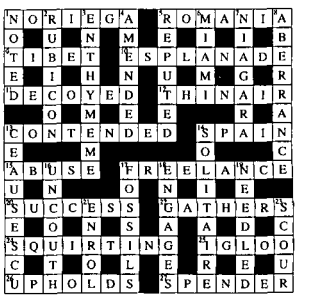
ACROSS

1. One finally becoming free, crooked and lame. (7)
2. Medicine man swallowing chopped leek before end of walk becomes leader taking steps. (2,5)
9. Overpowered named tie and nothing moved. (9)
10. If I left her, would a Frenchman appear? (5)
11. Shake out malt for light brown color. (7)
12. Originates a secret mixture. (7)
13. It could be a crime to say a nice thank you. (5)
14. Go without food and follow promising course. (4,5)
16. Unreliable estimate of cooking woks' surge. (9)
20. If these singers followed the sun back, they'd be near San Francisco. (5)
22. Noted food dispenser in Nassau tomato-farming plantation. (7)
24. Important food plants placed aside Rhode Island. (7)
26. Chain broken for take-over figure. (5)
27. Found airing toe awkward. (9)
28. Careful shading for Indian leaders. (7)
29. Silly nerd in HUD number. (7)

DOWN

1. Paving without electricity for form of address. (5)
2. Berlin organized around 1000 to be more flexible. (7)
3. Geniuses calculated sine before and after first try. (9)
4. Tell town about flat rod. (7)
5. Takes tax action for Wilmington channels? (7)
6. $1000 fine set for assault weapon. (5)
7. Famous Greek cooking treacle. (7)
8. Alcoholic beverages under castle area are souvenirs. (9)
13. Jolly grim giant is changing abode. (9)
15. Do it in art exhibit the old-fashioned way. (9)
17. To carry along an inert mixture. (7)
18. Exhausted deer excels. (7)
19. Funeral rite had skid badly. (7)
21. Blowing rain hit place of concealment. (4,3)
23. Insect ingests nitrogen for a period of time. (5)
25. Spanish football player doing what Congress does best. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

Public affairs books scheduled to be published this month.

Trial By Jury. Steven Brill and the editors and reporters of *The American Lawyer. Simon and Schuster, $24.95.* Bismarck said there were two things the public should never see being made: sausages and legislation. He might have added jury verdicts. In this collection of *American Lawyer* pieces covering 16 big trials of the eighties, jurors sulk in corners, sleep in court, and ignore the law routinely. Yet at times they perform their duties so responsibly that it's downright inspiring—especially compared to the incompetent and petty lawyers who prance before them. Is this any way to run a legal system?

Maybe not—but it's certainly the right way to report on one. And it's the kind of coverage that's too often neglected. Most legal controversies that capture national attention are debates about abstract principles. Can the constitution be read to contain a right of privacy, for example, and does that right include the right to abort a fetus? Can a public figure ever recover damages for libel, or would permitting such recoveries deter the aggressive press coverage the First Amendment deems critical in a free society?

These questions are important, of course, and make for sexy *Time* and *Newsweek* covers. But what's equally important yet frequently ignored is how well the legal principles that don't make headlines are applied in the trenches every day.

The "legal realists" of the 1930s—led by Jerome Frank, New Dealer, Yale professor, and federal judge—were the first to get exercised about this neglect of the front lines. Their argument was straightforward. Legal decisions are the product of two things: rules (Thou shalt not kill) and the facts that get plugged into them in a particular case (James killed Scott, so James goes to jail). This means that as citizens (and journalists) we've got three things to worry about: Are our rules really the right rules? Are we sure the true facts are being uncovered? And are the rules actually being applied to produce the result?

Big thinkers (then and now) prefer to focus on the first of these issues—on what "the law" should be. But the realists understood that if the fact-finding process is fouled up, or if the appropriate rules are in reality systematically ignored, then even the most theoretically just legal system may be a mockery and a fraud.

There's a message for serious legal journalists here: Though prestige may come with the Supreme Court beat, a lot of the real action is elsewhere, where judges and juries get their hands dirty.

Our top news outlets haven't been impressed enough by this fact to make a habit of such coverage. Woodward and Bernstein's *The Brethren* helped uncloak the mechanics of high court decision-making. And movies like *Twelve Angry Men* make useful civic fables. But this "realist" law beat had been left largely uncolonized by quality journalists until Steve Brill planted his flag a decade ago.

To be sure, *The American Lawyer* is still a trade rag, packed each month with law firm gossip, summer associate surveys, and breathless pullout sections on managing billables in the nineties. But at its best (and most anthology-worthy), the magazine has seen its mission as reporting on high-stakes trials to illustrate the successes and failures of frontline legal decision-making—how and why judges, juries, and lawyers do what they do, and why the rest of us, as citizens, should care.

On the strength of this mission Brill has attracted a string of first-rate reporters (including James Stewart, Connie Bruck, and Stephen Adler) that have made him one of *The Wall Street Journal*'s main farm clubs and one of journalism's best training grounds. Along the way he's gone far toward attacking the niche Jerome Frank yearned to see filled.

This collection is filled with cases in point. Take Brill's piece on Mobil chairman William Tavoulareas's libel suit against *The Washington Post*. The *Post* wrote in a 1979 story that Tavoulareas had used his position to "set up" his son in a lucrative shipping business that counted Mobil itself as its only customer. Under the law, for the high-profile Mobil executive to prevail, he'd need to show that the *Post* deliberately published falsehoods (of which there were virtually none), or that it acted with reckless disregard as to whether its assertions were true.

Back in the jury room, however, as Brill's interviews with the jurors reveal, this legal standard was turned on its head. A 27-year-old foreman used his "authority" as a reference librarian in the Library of Congress's law library to make the deliberations turn on whether the *Post* had sufficiently "proved" what the article had claimed—a notion utterly irrelevant to liability, and in fact subversive of the law's solicitude for hard-hitting press coverage of public figures.

In the John DeLorean entrapment case, however, a different jury dynamic emerged. The press at the time hyped the jury's acquittal as a broad signal to law enforcement authorities that they'd "gone too far." But Brill's reporting reveals a team of dedicated, thoughtful citizens scrupulously applying the judge's instructions to the evidence before them, alarmed by the notion that they were "sending signals" to anyone.

Brill and Connie Bruck explicate the Westmoreland and Sharon libel trials in several solid pieces. Their own exacting standards—particularly in explicitly sourcing their data ("Four jurors said" rather than "Jurors agreed") so that the reader can judge

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its credibility for himself—make them effective critics of sloppy journalism elsewhere.

On display throughout the book, of course, are the tit-for-tat, nit-picking, fetish-for-trivia pathologies that make lawyers (and I'm one of them) such a contemptible breed. Those details, combined with ample showcases of audacious puffery (Pennzoil's lawyer tells the jury, for example, that the suit against Texaco is "the most important case ever brought in the history of America—there isn't any question about that"), should make the book a handy reference tool for devoted lawyer-bashers.

Not everything works in these pieces, however. In articles on the Texaco-Pennzoil battle and the fight for Richard Lord's advertising agency, Brill gets bogged down parsing contract language in mind-numbing detail. A "layman's edit" might have helped these pieces move more gracefully beyond their original legal readership.

In addition, Brill and company often lapse into movie-reviews of the courtroom action that resemble the kind of trivializing legal journalism they aspire to rise above. Is it really that important to know, for example, that one lawyer's "Adolfo-clad wife, who often sits behind him" in court, "softens his image"? Or that another's "repertoire" includes a deference to the judge that is "a touch ingratiating"? Isn't this a tad silly?

These quibbles aside, the collection offers a unique and searching perspective on how our legal system is handling—and fumbling—some important issues. One word of advice: avoid legal overdose by reading the pieces in several sittings. It's better for your health.

—*Matthew Miller*

The Thirteen Keys to the Presidency. Allan J. Lichtman and Ken DeCell. *Madison Books, $24.95.* Lichtman and DeCell boldly claim to have the key, or rather all 13 keys, to presidential elections. It is hard to knock success, for they correctly call all 33 presidential elections from 1860 to date. The rule is simple: If no more than five keys are turned against the incumbent, the incumbent wins; If six or more are turned against the incumbent, the challenger wins. Their phenomenal success is backed up by a persuasive, detailed account of all 33 contests. The basic thesis is interesting. The book's weaknesses are that the development of the logic of the keys has a bit (not too much, but a bit) of academic defensiveness (covering their butts) to it, while the long review of each election is interesting and readable but becomes a bit stylized, since the authors have to cover each key each time. And one might quibble further. Why is six the magic number? (It happens to work, is the answer.) Why were the two most anti-incumbent elections (in 1876 and 1960 there were nine keys turned against the incumbent party) also two of the closest elections of all time? But why quibble. This is politics, where perfect is perfectly rare.

So what are the keys to victory and who controls them? Mostly the incumbent does. If the incumbent is running, if the incumbent's party is strong, if the path to nomination is unblocked and the path to election uncluttered by third parties, and if the incumbent has performed well in office on economic and foreign policy, made major policy changes, and avoided major scandal and social unrest, keys are turned in the incumbent party's favor. The only thing the challenger can do is be charismatic, but that, too, can be matched by the incumbent. Not only are these keys incumbent-centered, they are performance-centered—and they leave room neither for campaigning to matter nor for the challenger or challenging party to act.

The dominance of the incumbent and his performance is no surprise. A fourteenth key, the late V.O. Key, Jr., anticipated these keys, demonstrating the centrality of party and of performance on peace and prosperity (what he called retrospective voting) to voters and thus to elections. What is surprising about the keys, then, is not what is included but what is not.

Is there no room for issues, for ideology, for the campaign, or even for the challenger? Yes and no. Indirectly,

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yes. In the 1860 election, for instance, slavery appears in the keys through social turmoil, through the surge toward a Republican Congress, through divisions in the Democratic party, and through third-party candidacies. And yet often, no, not really. In 1988, for example, Lichtman and DeCell claim that Bush did not win due to a Republican "lock" on the presidency (with their keys, no party ever has a lock), due to an incompetent or too liberal Dukakis, or due to anything under the control of Democrats. Any Republican would have won, since Republicans had only three keys turned against them: the absence of an incumbent running, of major policy changes, and of charisma. Nothing else worked against Bush. Only a charismatic Democrat could have, and even that would not have been enough. Even a divided Republican party running, say, Pete DuPont would have won. To be sure, a Democratic victory was barely possible. Had, for instance, Bush won a divisive nomination, Pat Robertson bolted and made a strong third-party bid, and the Democrats nominated a charismatic candidate, they would have won, according to the keys. Jesse Jackson would now be president.

Lichtman and DeCell claim that voters make sensible, sound, political judgments. That's the good news. The bad news is that voters look backward to what has happened. They don't look forward to what could happen.

—John Aldrich

Barbara Walters. Jerry Oppenheimer. *St. Martin's Press, $19.95.* According to Jerry Oppenheimer, Barbara Walters is a fascinating, influential woman. A relentless, self-promoting perfectionist, obsessed with work and fame. She is also insecure, moody, and secretive. A sexy ice maiden, who pursued powerful men for a story rather than a romance; and who, after an uninspired start, gathered enough confidence and chutzpah to pierce the male chauvinism of broadcasting and land on top.

Oppenheimer claims that he has interviewed EVERYONE on Walters's life—more than 400 friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and enemies—but if you want to dish the dirt it's not all here. Example: In writing about Walters's affairs he omits one of her most prominent and well publicized suitors, Senator John Warner, who got so carried away that he proposed marriage (Walters said no).

What Oppenheimer does disclose is an early marriage in the 1950s that Walters would rather forget—her first of three, to a wealthy New York businessman, Robert Henry Katz. It was Katz who inadvertently launched her toward stardom when he suggested she go to work to combat persistent depression. Apparently the zeal with which she followed his suggestion led to the end of their union. The marriage was not annulled after less than a year (the usual story) but lasted for three years and ended in a somewhat amicable divorce. Mr. Katz has remained silent on the subject, but this has not stopped Oppenheimer from theorizing that "Barbara had allowed her job to take precedence over everything else. Without realizing it at the time, she was establishing a pattern that would prevail throughout her life, helping to destroy two marriages and sound the death knell to other relationships with men."

Oppenheimer also explains Walters's puzzling lifetime devotion to Roy Cohn. They had dated seriously when Walters was a junior at Sarah Lawrence and Cohn a rising young assistant district attorney. Over the years they contemplated tying the knot. But what cemented the relationship was Cohn's help when Walters wanted to adopt an infant daughter during her second marriage to producer Lee Guber. Had it not been for Cohn's assistance, notes Oppenheimer, Walters could have remained childless.

Another vignette involves Walters's best-selling book, *How to Talk With Practically Anybody About Practically Anything.* Since Walters lacked the time to actually write the work, Doubleday, the publisher, provided her with a well-known ghost, June Callwood. Callwood credits Walters with "enormous determination," and labels her "a shaky woman in a lot of ways, emotionally very vulnerable."

Despite the book's success, Callwood's contribution to the project remained hidden. She was not even included in the customary thank you's in the front of the book. Walters boasted it had taken only two years to create, the hardest part being the table of contents. When *People* magazine published that Callwood was the actual writer, Walters quickly asked her for a denial. Callwood acquiesced and finally received a thank-you note.

What is most interesting here is Oppenheimer's presentation of the inside gossip of the early years of television—the behind-the-scenes intrigues, friendships, squabbles, and struggles of the poor little rich girl striving for success.

After a stint as a booker at CBS and as a PR rep for the legendary Tex McCrary, Walters joined NBC's "Today Show" as a writer-assistant to The Face, Anita Colby, in 1961. Colby quickly ascertained Walters's insatiable appetite for the limelight and helped her to get on camera, by assigning her to cover fashion shows and feature stories. Her first big break came when she accompanied Jackie Kennedy on her trip to India. Alternating between threatening, whining, and cajoling—tactics she would employ throughout her career—Walters managed an exclusive interview with the First Lady. Never one to miss an opportunity, she also forged a useful bond with first friend, Joan Braden, who would later provide an invaluable service: introductions to the movers and shakers of Washington.

After covering the Kennedy assassination, Walters fought tooth and nail for the highly visible role of the Today Girl, with no success. Finally, when NBC had no one else to turn to, and with the help of the host, Hugh Downs, she made it on the air in 1964. No dummy, she put together a crack management and publicity team. By clever manipulation of male powerbrokers she worked her way up to queen of the airwaves. Oppenheimer depicts Walters's constant lobbying to expand her domain, her supposed feud with Sally Quinn (when Quinn joined rival CBS) and the contempt of male journalists, who considered Walters a major embarrassment.

One of her fiercest opponents was the late NBC newsman, Frank McGhee. Between 7 and 9 each morning he supposedly made her life a "living hell."

McGhee would not speak to her off-

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camera, disparaged her interviews, and refused to allow her to report on certain subjects. To put it bluntly, he despised her. So did Harry Reasoner.

Nevertheless, middle America loved Barb; and her access to celebrities, which led to "The Barbara Walters Specials," turned her into an icon of sorts.

Hopefully, Barbara Walters will decide to write her own biography. Hopefully, she will do it soon and tell us ALL.

Now blonder, smoother of cheek and jowl, more streamlined than ever at the age of sixty (Walters admits to 58), and earning more than a million annually, she seems firmly ensconced in the video firmament. The ultimate survivor, who despite her frequent coy, cloying questions and pronounced lisp, can corner the latest celebrity and get him or her to talk.

—Sandra McElwaine

The Decline of American Parties 1952-1988. Martin P. Wattenberg. *Harvard University Press, $10.95.* Delbert Latta is an Ohio Republican who served in the House from 1958-1988, best known for the Gramm-Latta budget and reconciliation bills. He tells a story about the first time he and Mrs. Latta were invited to the White House. Lyndon Johnson proffered the invitation. The Lattas had a marvelous time. They met with dignitaries, they ate a fine supper, they danced and, at one point, the president himself cut in. When the Lattas returned home and checked in on the kids, Del was so excited, he woke his young son just to tell him the news: "Your mother danced with the President of the United States." "But Dad," the boy shot back, "the president is a Democrat."

If you had any doubts, Martin P. Wattenberg's book shows that partisanship like that is now largely out of fashion. It is the intensity of party identification that Wattenberg focuses on; he notices that, while people change their party identity only rarely, the significance of that affiliation waxes and wanes over time.

From data collected in the National Election Studies (NES), which were inaugurated in 1952 and have been conducted in each presidential campaign since, Wattenberg devised a

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measure of indifference or neutrality toward the political parties. Among other questions, NES respondents are asked what they like and dislike about each party. Some people have nothing to say, good or ill, about either party. In 1952, only 10 percent were in that group, and most of them were apolitical—they knew little about the candidates and very few voted. In the 1980s, about 33 percent of the respondents had nothing to say about the parties, even though this group identified differences between them, had likes and dislikes about the candidates, and voted about as frequently as other respondents. By contrast, when similar like/dislike questions were asked about the candidates during the same period, the percentage of nothing-to-say hardly varied.

Wattenberg devised a broader measure of indifference toward the parties to ascertain an overall positive, neutral, or negative attitude. He discovered that from 1952 through 1980, there was a steady increase in the percentage of respondents who were truly neutral, all at the expense of the true partisan category. There has been a small shift back to partisanship in the eighties, but the basic trend toward indifference is well entrenched.

What explains these changes? We might be tempted to round up the usual suspects: broad demographic changes, the parties' failure to differentiate themselves, and a growing, general distrust of government. Further specific examples might include a better-educated electorate, which might be expected to make its political choices without the help of party cues; and the natural course of generational replacement that produces new voters coming to the political world too long after realigning events, like the Depression and the New Deal, which gave meaning and strength to their parents' and grandparents' political identification, but not theirs.

But according to Wattenberg, it turns out these are not the culprits. Strikingly, while the level of formal education has grown dramatically during the same period, the trend toward neutrality in party evaluation is the same at all education levels. Plus, all age cohorts have moved toward neutral evaluations, suggesting that while older generations don't tend to change their party affiliations, the labels used to have more meaning for them than they do now.

Wattenberg argues that the public has no difficulty finding differences between the parties; paradoxically, the trend here moves opposite the trend toward neutrality. What has changed, he says, is the perception that one party will do better than the other at handling what people see as the most significant problems of the day. In part this reflects a changing perception of the problems—drugs and moral decay are social problems that the federal government is not likely to solve overnight. But it is more than insuperable problems that explain changes in this perception. Budget deficits, which had long been thought a problem that Republicans were best suited to solve, are still on the list of problems, but no longer is one party seen as better equipped than the other to handle them.

No, it's not so much the national issues but the changes in our political structure—the rise of entrepreneurial candidates for president and for Congress facilitated by changes in media coverage and new forms of campaign financing—that best explain why the electorate now links issues with candidates, not parties. Wattenberg discusses some of these changes. One fascinating detail is the rise in neutrality of print media, associated with the disappearance of competing papers and best shown in the percentage of newspapers that endorse presidential candidates. In the 1930s, about 95 percent of newspapers made such endorsements; in the 1960s, about 77 percent did; but in 1988, less than 45 percent endorsed a candidate.

Wattenberg is certainly correct when he concludes that we now vote for the person, not for the party. But what makes Wattenberg's book important? After all, analysis of the fall of American political parties has been a growth industry for scholars and journalists at least since the early seventies.

Wattenberg's news is that what's afoot is not hostility but indifference—a subtle but important distinction, especially for understanding our most recent elections. In most theories of affect, love and hate are closer to each other than to indifference. So where there is hostile rejection of one or both parties, there is still hope of realignment, of significant switches toward one party, in effect revitalizing both. But if Wattenberg is right and the significance of party affiliation has been drained away, changes in party identity mean little—Wattenberg describes them as "hollow realignment." I believe his view best explains how, for instance, Bush could win in an electoral landslide while losing seats in the Senate and House, earning him the weakest base of party support in Congress of any president in history. It also may explain why disillusionment persists about the Democratic party, even though Democrats won six of eight recent congressional special elections and did better than expected in the two they lost. And most important, Wattenberg's idea explains why presidential support is so broad and yet so shallow—why it can't be translated into a mandate.

Much that is wrong with contemporary politics can be blamed on party indifference. Weakened parties help explain declining participation in federal elections—barely 50 percent of the eligible citizens voted in the last presidential election, the lowest percentage in 64 years. They can also explain the excesses of negative campaigns, since a personalized politics requires harsh negative attacks to distinguish the candidates. When party identity is a powerful influence on choice, there is less incentive for mudslinging, because strong partisans already see their own candidate in a good light and the opponent in a bad one.

A politics dominated by candidates' personalities ignores the future. Parties, much more so than candidates, have an incentive to look beyond the next election, to take risks for the long run. And strong partisans form hearty, stable attachments resistant to the influences of the moment. As Walter Dean Burnham once wrote, "Pure candidate-domination of elections is a recipe for irresponsible, unaccountable performance in office." The trend away from party and towards personality is a return to a very old tradition in American politics. There is no doubt that indiffer-

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ence, and even anti-party sentiment, describes our earliest days; the election of George Washington was plainly a triumph of personal image over any of the issues that came to be associated with the Federalist party. But we are probably now ill-served by this 18th century view; Wattenberg has shown that we need a new vision of politics, a new form of partisanship, that recognizes the candidate as the center of the universe but also takes the best from American political parties—their stability and orientation to the future.

—David Pomerantz

Rx for Texas: Staying in Business in the 90's. David Ronin. *Taylor, $16.95.* In 1988, the giant Formosa Plastics Group of Taiwan, facing stiff environmental protests at home, decided to build its smelly new petrochemical plant where it was welcome: Calhoun County, Texas. The proud Lone Star State didn't merely accept the $1.3 billion project, expected to produce about 1,500 permanent jobs for Americans. Terrified of losing the plant, Texas dispatched economic-development delegations to Taiwan on bended knee, bearing promises of swift environmental approvals and a tidy $168 million package of tax abatements and other inducements.

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It is the Lone Star State that is the subject of David Ronin's book. But with the New England economy now in early freefall, the patterns of

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regional boom-and-bust resonate across America. Remember: Long before economic gurus pronounced Massachusetts a recession-proof miracle, they were calling Texas the promised land. Its decline started with its core industry, energy, then rippled into real estate and banking; substitute high-tech for oil and gas, and you see the very same pattern afflicting New England.

So Ronin's prescription for healing Texas might make interesting reading even for Yankees—if only it offered any real promise of a cure.

A Texas business writer, market researcher, and MBA, Ronin embraces the blunt "let-me-tell-it-to-ya-straight" style of offering his wisdom. Ronin is a self-styled "born-again Texan" (he arrived in 1971), and, with the passion of the converted, he offers a selfishly statist perspective. Texas's dependence on agricultural and oil exports has made it "an economic colony" for the rest of America and the world, argues Ronin. But oil and gas reserves are dwindling, and so is the underground water supply that makes farming and ranching possible on the arid half of the state west of Austin. More of the same simply cannot do.

The author persuasively dismisses solutions popular with public officials and economic-development specialists. High-tech projects are "relatively insignificant in an economy as large as that of Texas," he notes; opportunities to attract relocating corporations or foreign plants (like Formosa) are costly and rare.

But Ronin doesn't stop there. In sweeping rhetorical flourishes, he dismisses the economic value of defense contracts, military bases, and corporate branch plants—bulwarks of the post-bust Texas economy. "[I]t's probably a blessing in disguise," Ronin argues, "that small Texas cities lost out in the competition a few years ago to become the site of the General Motors Saturn Corporation facilities."

Those small Texas cities—now struggling with high unemployment—might well beg to differ. But Ronin insists such projects would make Texas an "economic junkie," dependent on outsiders "for another injection into its economic mainstream." Instead, as the central theme of his book, Ronin preaches the gospel of "bootstrap economics"—"pull[ing] ourselves out of this mess with our own hands," and becoming "economically self-reliant."

In Texas, that's a crowd-pleasing suggestion. And the handful of ideas Ronin cites for working toward that goal certainly makes sense: Intensive local efforts to support existing small businesses, since such companies produce most new jobs. A replica of the "Oregon Marketplace" program, which encourages companies buying goods out of state to find local suppliers. And expansion of a pilot Texas program to expand in-state processing of the state's agricultural harvest.

But Ronin's basic premise is misguided. If Texas can no longer afford to be a colony, neither can it afford to act as though it were still an independent nation. In modern times, as a clear-eyed look at the world reveals, economic self-reliance is impossible for a country, much less a single state. And to what end, even in theory, would Texas become economically self-reliant? Does it serve a national interest for Texas to take jobs away from Ohio?

Rx for Texas offers little that could make a significant difference during the 1990s. Ronin expresses dismay at the state's failings in public education, but offers few specific suggestions. He says nothing about boosting productivity—except that he's for it.

Perhaps more than any other group of Americans, Texans truly believe that through grit and hard work and sheer force of will, they can shape the world and alter history. But the harsh reality is that Texas, like other regions, is inevitably subject to the boom and bust of economic cycles. It makes far more sense to recognize that reality than to tilt at windmills.

David Ronin's biography gives some evidence that he has learned that lesson himself. His book jacket reports that at one point he became an entrepreneur, but his business "fell victim to a breach of contract. After finding out the hard way how much it costs to maintain a lawsuit, he decided it was cheaper in the long run to become an attorney himself." Ronin is now a student at the University of Texas Law School.

—Peter Elkind

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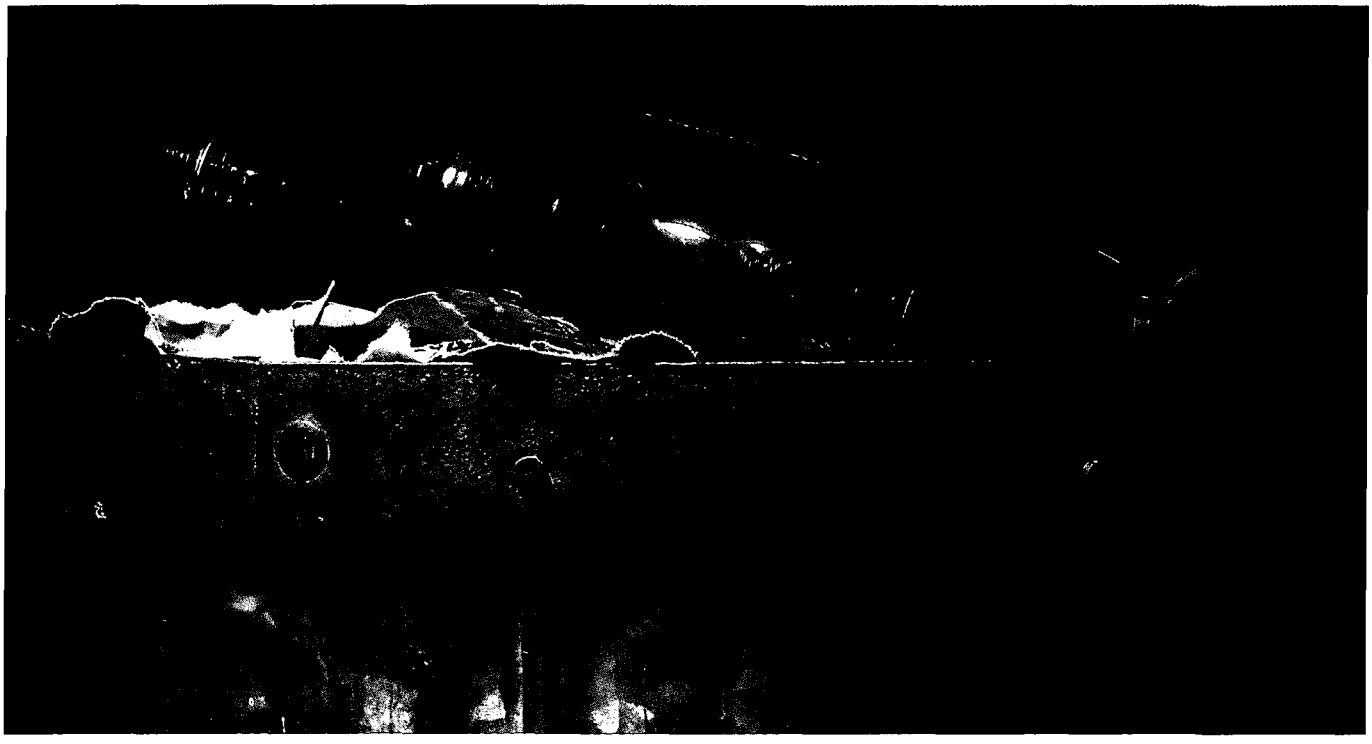

he bottle may be empty, yet it's ything but trash. In fact, this empty ttle is actually full of potential. hanks to recycling.

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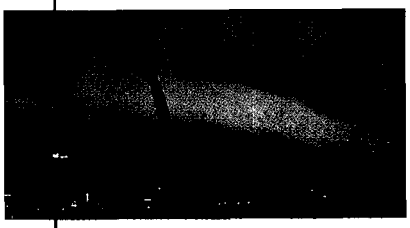
THESE ARE SOME OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF LIFE INSURANCE POLICIES

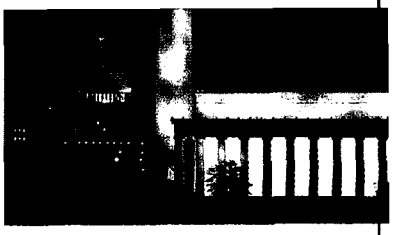
Individual policyholders and their families are not the only beneficiaries of life insurance.



America's cities and towns are beneficiaries, too.

Baltimore, Maryland is a thriving business center because life insurance companies invested in the Inner Harbor Development Project. Hundreds of millions of dollars in insurance capital converted Boston's Back Bay from a blighted high crime area into a thriving financial and residential center.

Other communities which have benefited from investment of policyholders' reserve funds by insurance companies include the Louisville Riverfront, St. Louis' Gateway Arch Redevelopment, and downtown Washington, D.C.



In short, life insurance capital is helping hundreds of cities and towns across America, providing development funds and creating thousands of jobs. Altogether, life insurance and pension reserves account for one of the largest private sector sources of capital for America's renewal and growth.

The Life Insurance Industry Is A Significant Source Of Capital For America's Renewal And Growth.

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